THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 15 April, 1933 Number 4

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

UNITED FRONT AND REVOLUTIONARY UNITY

R. P. D.

The I.L.P. Conference

WILLIAM RUST

The Belfast Railway Strike

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 211

UNITED FRONT AND REVOLUTIONARY UNITY

By R. P. D.

The I.L.P. Conference - - - - „ 238

By WILLIAM RUST

The Belfast Railway Strike - - - „ 244

By WILLIAM COWE

The German Situation - - - - „ 252

By R. F. ANDREWS

The World of Labour - - - - „ 257

BRITAIN: LABOUR MONTHLY Conference on Revolutionary Policy

I.—R. P. Dutt's Letter II.—Report of Conference

INTERNATIONAL: For the United Front against Fascism!

Book Review - - - - - „ 270

Lenin and the Masses - - *By* HARRY POLLITT

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The United Front—Last Year and Now—Germany—The Outlook—The United Front in Britain—The United Front and Revolutionary Policy — Two Tasks — Revolutionary Workers' Duty—I.L.P. Conference—The Issue at Derby —Bradford Unclearness—Chaos in Practice—Revolutionary Policy or Left Labourism—Controversy on Democracy —Issue To Be Fought—Revolutionary Policy Committee—Why Hesitate on Communism?—What Holds Back?—Rôle of Revolutionary Party—Two-Party Views—Denial of Party Leading Rôle—Opposition of Party and Class—Party and Non-Party Bodies—Opposition to Centralisation—Mistakes in Communist Practice—Essential Principle of Party Leading Rôle—Condition of Victory— Relation of Party and Class—Party as Unity of Working-Class Struggle—Towards Revolutionary Mass Party in Britain —Left I.L.P.-ers and Communism

A CRITICAL situation faces the world working class. By the events in Germany the heaviest blow of the capitalist reaction since the war has been struck. The question of Germany is the centre of the question of the extension of the world revolution ; the working class in Germany is the strongest, the most politically conscious and the most highly organised outside the Soviet Union ; on the fate of the German working class turns the immediate future of the international working class. If this offensive succeeds without resistance, it will be rapidly followed, not only by intensified reaction in every country, but by the supreme offensive of world capitalism against the final fortress of the working class, against the Soviet Union. *Every force of united working class resistance is now needed in every country to drive back the offensive of capitalist reaction.* The present events have dealt a shattering blow to all reformist legalist

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illusions, and have awakened masses of workers to the desperate necessity of unity and struggle. A big drive for united action is sweeping through the working class. The Second International has been compelled to change its tone and begin to speak, even though in very vague terms, of a united front with the Communists; first, through various speeches of its leaders; then at last through the Manifesto of February 19th. With merciless definiteness the Communist International has immediately seized upon this opportunity and put forward concrete proposals for a united front in every country to fight the world capitalist offensive. This issue now becomes the dominant issue. It is the supreme opportunity, already desperately late and at the eleventh hour, to build the united working class front at the opening of a new period of intensified reaction, wars and revolutionary struggles.

LAST July, in the Notes on "The Burning Question of Working-Class Unity," we wrote that the coming intensified offensive of world capitalist reaction, centring on the questions of German Fascism and of war, would force the whole question of working-class unity to a new plane in every country in the near future.

> One question dominates all others to-day. *Are the working-class forces ready for the overwhelming offensive which world capitalism is preparing?* . . . The new manifold offensive of the National Government in Britain; the Junker-Generals' Government in Germany and direct building up of Fascism with State support; the mass terror in India; the extending war in the Far East and provocation against the Soviet Union; the war plans and war blocs preparing through the diplomatic conferences—these are the signs of what is confronting us. *To fight this offensive with all the combined power of the working class, to transform the issues to the issue of the social revolution, which can alone save the workers from the ruin and destruction in front, this now requires the massing of the working-class front and overcoming of every obstacle to working-class unity in action in the immediate stage of the struggle now opening.* . . . It is the whole existence and future of the working-class movement, of socialism, that is at stake.

This was in July. On July 20th came the Von Papen coup overthrowing the Parliamentary Social Democratic Government

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in Prussia. The Communist Party proposed common action to the Social Democratic Party and to the Trade Unions. There was no response. This was already the decisive moment to have begun the struggle. On January 30th came the Hitler régime. The Communist Party put forward again its proposals for a united call for a general strike. There was still no response. Now the lash of Fascism is convincing the whole mass of social democratic workers of the necessity of common struggle. Under desperately difficult conditions the united front has to be formed.

THE biggest battles, the decisive fight against fascism lies in front. The violence and intensity of the capitalist reaction is a measure, not of the strength, but of the instability of capitalism in face of the growing crisis, and of the close approach of revolutionary issues. The old methods of holding in the workers which were appropriate to the "normal" conditions of stabilisation, through legal democratic forms with social democracy as the direct instrument, are now no longer adequate. Desperate methods of violence have to be brought into play, involving the breaking up of the workers' organisations even though under social democratic leadership, and even though the social democratic leaders are at the same time swearing their loyalty to a fascist government ("We shall be a legal opposition . . . we shall confine ourselves to the rôle of fair critics": Stampfer, Editor of *Vorwaerts*, on "March 5th and Its Lessons.") But what does this mean? The social democratic leaders, and especially the trade union leaders, may seek to reach an accommodation with fascism, as in Italy. But for the mass of the social democratic workers this whole process means a smashing of the old legalist, democratic peaceful illusions, and an awakening to the necessity of revolutionary struggle. And it is to this new stage of struggle that the united front is the first stage, the opening out of advance to revolutionary struggle. *A point has been reached in which every middle course is revealed as more and more manifestly untenable, in which the final issue becomes ever clearer and closer: Either destruction of capitalism or destruction of the working-class movement.*

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IT is this uneasy apprehension of the further possibilities that leads to the undercurrent of anxiety in the comments of the international bourgeoisie on the Hitler régime, despite all their delight at the blows against the proletariat. Not only the typically cautious Liberal-Conservative organ of the City, the *Economist*, gives characteristic expression to these fears (March 4, 1933) :

> It is a dangerous road. True, the Communist movement has grown to formidable proportions. One thing, however, is sure, and that is that the present developments will strengthen it and drive Germany towards both extremes, and if the Right in its present temper seizes power, what of the future ? After all, it was not Communism, but the Wilhelmian compound of Junkerdom with commercial imperialism, that was responsible for Germany's supreme disaster in 1918. No thinking person can fail to ask himself whether like causes will not produce like effects.

But even the extreme Right militarist *Morning Post* is no less open in its alarm (February 24, 1933) :

> It will be impossible to enforce working-class submission for ever. . . . The Nazis are driving the working class into unity and creating for the first time a real revolutionary danger.

In the same way the *Temps* expresses its anxiety :

> No one can tell what is reserved for the German people after to-morrow. The only fact that can be established is that the German crisis, which has been developing for months, is now degenerating into a civil war, and is rushing a great nation still further into anarchy and political chaos. No one in history has yet succeeded in establishing order in a durable manner through disorder.

The Swedish Liberal *Stockholms Tidningen* expresses in all simplicity the basis of alarm :

> The German Government is destroying just those democratic forces which are best capable of combating the real danger.

That is, the weakening and discrediting of Social Democracy raises at once the danger that the majority of the workers will become revolutionised and pass from its control. But for the very same reason Social Democracy fears nothing more than the united working-class front, as their reception of the Communist International proposals is already beginning to show (" trials of strength by illegal mass action are bound to

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end in defeat": Kautsky on the Communist International proposals for united "mass protests, street demonstrations and political mass strikes"). *Working-class unity is a revolutionary interest.* Mass unity in resistance to the fascist attack is the first step to a new stage of struggle.

IN Britain the beginning of a united front has been established with the participation of the Independent Labour Party and of the Communist Party. This is to the good; but it is the merest beginning, not yet reaching more than a tiny fraction of the working class. The task now is to reach to the mass of the workers, in the factories, in the streets, and in the mass organisations of the workers, the trade unions. Without such a mass basis the united front becomes only a doubtful bargain between two parties, whose basic political outlooks are still necessarily divergent, in place of a beginning of wider common action of the working class. The united front only has meaning in relation to action. To prepare such action it is necessary to develop, not only mass agitation (joint demonstrations, &c.), but mass organisation. Such mass organisation, to be effective for struggle, requires to be based above all upon the factories, and upon the organised workers in the trade unions. *The combined membership of the Independent Labour Party and of the Communist Party should use their united strength throughout the country to develop factory organisation and to develop militant movements in the trade unions.* On this the realisation of the united front depends.

DOES the fact that a united front is at present established between the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party mean that the basic problems of revolutionary policy and of building a single revolutionary party are thereby solved or shelved? Of course not. These questions become the more urgent, the more the movement advances. The united front is only a temporary agreement of common struggle, despite divergent outlooks and aims, for common immediate concrete objectives. But all the basic problems of

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policy, of the further development of the struggle, of the path of advance to socialism, of revolutionary leadership, remain to be solved. Not only that, but the very advance of the immediate struggle makes these problems the more urgent. Any step of struggle against capitalism to-day rapidly raises basic questions of the whole conditions of the struggle of the working class against capitalism and of revolutionary advance. And it is the task of the politically conscious workers, of the militant advance guard, to be prepared for this, and to hammer out the common line of revolutionary policy and of revolutionary leadership for the development of the struggle.

IT is essential to grasp firmly this two-fold character of the task confronting the militant workers in the present situation, at once to carry forward the united front of immediate struggle, and at the same time to hammer out the basic issues of revolutionary policy and build the single revolutionary leadership. Neither can be adequate apart from the other. It may be said in effect—although the distinction cannot be carried too far—that there are two basic needs of the working-class movement in Britain in order to advance and to achieve the workers' way out of the crisis. The first is unity in action of the workers in the struggle against capitalism. The second is a revolutionary leadership, developing as an integral part of the mass struggle, which can guide the struggle and carry it forward to the final overthrow of capitalism. The two are indissolubly connected and can only develop together. Neither has yet existed in Britain. The workers' struggles have been isolated, sectional and divided by the reformist leadership. The traditional workers' parties that have existed (Labour Party and I.L.P.) have been reformist parliamentary parties, not concerning themselves with the leadership of the workers' struggle as a whole. The only party which has attempted to build up revolutionary leadership of the workers' struggle as a whole, the Communist Party, has been too small and limited in influence to be able to realise its rôle yet.

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WHAT has been the consequence of this essential weakness of the working-class movement up to the present? The consequence has shown itself in defeat after defeat, continuous worsening of conditions, and weakening of the working-class movement in face of the ever growing capitalist offensive. To-day we are on the eve of a profound transformation. Under the blows of capitalism, the workers are awakening to the necessity of united struggle, and have already begun to develop increasingly the first beginnings of united front forms in the localities. At the same time the politically conscious workers who were previously under the influence of reformism, as represented in the Independent Labour Party, are in increasing number, awakening to the necessity of a revolutionary policy and a revolutionary party. But there is still much confusion, weakness, cross-purposes and unnecessary division. *What is necessary now is to develop the united working-class front on the widest possible scale, and at the same time, through it and within it, to draw together all the politically conscious revolutionary workers in a single revolutionary party capable of leading the struggle.* It is in relation to this process that the issues of the Easter Conference of the I.L.P. should be judged.

IN this perspective let us come to the problems of the Easter Conference of the I.L.P. at Derby, not as the isolated problems of a particular historical party, but as a stage in the whole process of advance of the left workers from reformism towards the realisation of the future single revolutionary party. All the issues that have been gathering within the I.L.P., that is, among the left workers who are feeling their way from reformism to revolutionary policy, come to a head at Derby. What is the position? The I.L.P. has broken with the Labour Party. It has condemned reformism and declared the will to go forward as a revolutionary party on the basis of Marxism. This decision, reached at the Bradford Conference last August, is a big step forward. But it is manifestly only a beginning. All the issues of revolutionary programme and policy, of methods of struggle and organisation,

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of international affiliation, of the relation to Communism, still confront the I.L.P. These issues, of vital importance to the working class, now come up before the Conference at Easter. It may well be that the Derby Conference will not yet see their final solution. On the contrary, with the Derby Conference a new stage of battle opens in the I.L.P. But the character of the fight put up by the revolutionary wing at Derby will be of critical importance for the whole future line.

FOR *the battle between the revolutionaries and the reformists has still to be fought in the I.L.P.* This is the all-important fact to recognise. It is commonly spoken, even by some left representatives, as if the I.L.P. were *already* a " revolutionary " " Marxist " party, and as if the problem of the I.L.P. and the C.P. were thus a problem of " two revolutionary Marxist parties." The discussion on this basis is turned into a discussion of details and minutiæ, personal habits, practical faults, &c., as between the two parties. These questions also have their importance, and will be found on analysis, despite their apparently subjective and superficial character, to carry concealed within them basic issues of revolutionary political principle and organisation which are not yet accepted by left I.L.P.-ers. To these we shall return. But it is necessary first to be quite clear that the most elementary issues of political programme still require to be settled, that the official majority policy of the I.L.P. is still in fact parliamentary-reformist-pacifist in character, and that the revolutionary wing is in no position yet to hold up the I.L.P. as an " alternative revolutionary party," from this position criticising the C.P., but has still to fight its battle for a revolutionary programme. In order to carry this battle through, the revolutionary wing will itself have to reach complete clearness of programme, which it has not yet reached. The more it approaches this clearness, the more—as the course of discussion has already abundantly shown—it will find itself inevitably adopting the programme of Communism, step by step dropping each reserve and hesitation, until at last it becomes

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manifest to every serious left I.L.P.-er that *the only consistent platform on which the revolutionary wing in the I.L.P. can carry through its fight is the open platform of Communism without reservation, that is, the platform of the Communist International.* When this point of political clearness has been reached, the detail and subjective questions, which at present give so much difficulty, will rapidly be solved.

THE Bradford Conference in fact settled nothing. What is the line of the Bradford programme ? There is no clearness or certainty. Disputes between leading spokesmen in the official I.L.P. press show that every kind of view and interpretation is put forward. One section, including National Council spokesmen, regard the break with the Labour Party as on technical grounds only, and not on basic policy, and advocate the line of parliamentarism, of the winning of a parliamentary majority, as the path to socialism. Another section, represented by the Revolutionary Policy Committee, claim that the I.L.P. has broken with the basis of parliamentary democracy, and proclaim full agreement in principle with the line of the Communist International, putting forward only special reasons of a tactical or organising character for finally holding off from Communism. Between these conflicting expressions, voices of the rank and file ask repeatedly for a clear statement of policy, and complain again and again of the fog of contradictions and uncertainties in which they find themselves.

AN illuminating picture of the existing complete chaos of the line since Bradford is provided by the complaint of a branch secretary to the I.L.P. organ, with reference to the discussion on " democracy " :

> *The present situation is not a little chaotic.*
>
> *My own branch had recently to curtail its propaganda because of the hopeless incompatibility of the policies expressed by I.L.P. speakers.* I enumerate the reasons advanced (at the same street corner and on three successive Wednesdays) for contesting local and national elections :

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1. To prove the utter futility of democratic machinery.
2. To be in a position of relative power when the revolutionary situation arises.
3. To continue to use the ballot box as the best possible method since a revolutionary situation is by no means certain.

> While it may be permissible for I.L.P.-ers to hold any such views, it is obviously absurd that our public platform should be the medium for these expressions. But the whole point is that each comrade tried honestly to interpret facts. (F. W. Horne, West Willesden, in *New Leader*, November 11, 1932.)

This is the living reality of the Bradford programme, when attempted to be translated into daily practice at the street corner. Similar complaints abound in the correspondence to the party organ. One comrade speaks of " our confused minds," Another finds the Bradford programme " not clear." Another asks : " Perhaps we can be enlightened as to the actual I.L.P. position ? " Such is the leadership provided by Bradford for the I.L.P. This *confusion* is the hallmark of centrism, of the imaginary " middle policy " between Labourism and Communism.

HAS the I.L.P. broken with the Labour Party on the basic issue of revolutionary policy, or on technical grounds of freedom of action to advocate a Left Labourist line within the Labour Party ? The latter is the point of view expressed in the I.L.P. organ by a spokesman of the National Council, Skinner :

> Why should we seek now to deceive ourselves as to why we broke from the Labour Party ? We broke because we could not get a basis of co-operation with the Labour Party that would give freedom of action to our parliamentary representatives against any possible repetition of such a disastrous failure of socialist planning. Had we been able to get that freedom of action we should be in the Labour Party now. (*New Leader*, December 2, 1932.)

This statement appeared in the I.L.P. organ from a member of the National Council, and has not been repudiated by any other leader, so that we may assume it to express the official policy. This is in agreement with the terms of settlement proposed by the I.L.P. to the Labour Party on the eve of

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Bradford, that the I.L.P. should be bound by the decisions of the Labour Party Conference, *i.e.*, by the decisions of the Labour bureaucracy; and with the subsequent statement of the Secretary on the breakdown:

> Had the will to peace existed in the Executive of the Labour Party, the technicalities could have been surmounted. (*New Leader*, July 1, 1932.)

But if the difference with the Labour Party is only one of "technicalities," it follows that these "technicalities" may yet be surmounted, and the return to the Labour Party may yet take place, in the view of the official leadership. This is obviously at complete variance with the view of the rank and file, who regard themselves as having made a complete break with the whole line of the Labour Party.

HAS the I.L.P. broken with the basis of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism? Again there is complete confusion in the answer. A whole correspondence on this develops after Bradford in the *New Leader*. Leading members say: No, the basis remains parliamentary democracy. Other members say: Yes, the I.L.P. has broken with parliamentary democracy. Once again, nothing is cleared. Indeed, this whole correspondence on "The I.L.P. and Democracy" immediately after Bradford throws a sharp light on the position. One of the left leaders, C. A. Smith, Chairman of the London Divisional Council, ventured to declare that by the Bradford decisions

> Our party has definitely abandoned reliance upon political democracy and advocates revolutionary socialism. (C. A. Smith, Chairman of the London Divisional Council of the I.L.P. in the *New Leader*, November 4, 1932.)

He was immediately challenged by a host of correspondents who pointed out that nothing of the kind had happened. In addition to the Secretary, who merely pleaded against any "dogmatic assertion" or "rigid formulation of policy" (*i.e.*, against any clearness on the cardinal issue of reformist and revolutionary policy), two members of the National Council took part. One, Sandham, declared:

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> With all its faults the parliamentary democratic weapon is still one with more possibilities in Britain than Dr. Smith allows it. The I.L.P. philosophy is contained in this belief. (E. Sandham, National Council, in the *New Leader*, November 18, 1932.)

Which of these two conflicting statements is correct? There is no doubt which is the official policy. The only other National Council member participating, Skinner, made the declaration quoted above on the reasons for leaving the Labour Party, and insists on the minority character of the Revolutionary Policy Committee view. No less specific was the statement of the Chairman, Brockway, at the I.L.P. Summer School Conference, according to the *New Leader* report:

> Governmental power by the workers, Mr. Brockway told the I.L.P. Summer School, would help that change, and the I.L.P. must go all out to get parliamentary and municipal power.

At the same Conference Skinner declared on the difference between the I.L.P. and the C.P.:

> The real difference between the bodies is that the I.L.P. are democrats, and the C.P. is not. . . . The I.L.P. ought to be training the workers to use democratic machinery.

We are indebted to this National Council member for this simple statement of the difference between the I.L.P. and the C.P., when so many would-be left members of the I.L.P. are struggling to find an elusive difference only in C.P. habits of "jargon," "rigidity," "arrogance," "misrepresentation," &c. The difference is, as this I.L.P. leader correctly understands it, a very simple political difference, between revolutionary policy and parliamentary democracy, that is, between revolutionary policy and reformism.

THE revolutionary wing of the I.L.P. will have to conduct a fight against this whole system of confusion and actual continuance of the reformist parliamentary-democratic line beneath a cover of "revolutionary" and "Marxist" labels. But this fight requires absolute clearness of the alternative revolutionary programme. The draft programme which has been prepared by the Revolutionary Policy

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Committee and adopted by the London Division cannot yet be said to have achieved this clearness. Although endeavouring to make an approach to Communist principles by the mention of the "Workers' Dictatorship," its general conceptions remain very close to the Bradford basis. Typical is the statement as to the capture of parliamentary government:

> The existing organs of national and local government, being part of the machinery of capitalism, cannot be used as *the main instrument* for the capture of power.

Not as "the main instrument." Is not this the very echo of the official programme's "not purely electoral means" ("abandonment of the purely electoral method," Paton in the *New Leader*, December 16, 1932)? The capture of parliamentary government is not "the *main* instrument"; therefore it is to some extent an instrument. In exactly the same way the official programme declares for the "capture of the organs of government both national and local" and then proceeds to add that "this is only one aspect of the struggle." On this basis the Chairman can give out the lead in practice that "the I.L.P. must go all out to get parliamentary and municipal power" and at the same time assure his left critics that this is all part of a "revolutionary" programme. This is the invariable centrist line of facing both ways of "partly . . . partly" the *conciliation* of the parliamentary conquest of power and of the revolutionary conquest of power. On the basis of such a programme the left wing in the I.L.P. cannot put up an effective fight against the official line.

WHAT is the weakness that hampers and paralyses at present the leaders of the left wing in the I.L.P. from reaching a clear line? At bottom it is still the same weakness that stamps the whole I.L.P. line the endeavour to find an imaginary middle course that grows more elusive, the more it is pursued. This reaches an extreme point with the left wing because it is obvious, and even agreed in principle that the left wing line of fight in the I.L.P. can in reality only be the Communist line. Nevertheless, there is still the

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hesitation to take a straight and open Communist stand on the basis of the platform of the Communist International; there is still the ever more laborious and painful endeavour to find a line of demarcation which grows constantly narrower. Why? Why should it be necessary to find a line of demarcation? The Revolutionary Policy Committee has not yet defined its line in relation to the Communist International. The resolutions for approaching the Communist International with a view to affiliation which have been passed by the London and Lancashire Divisions have been resolutions arising from below, and not through the sponsorship of the Revolutionary Policy Committee. Even these resolutions express the issue as one of negotiation rather than a definite conscious line. What is there needing to be negotiated in a political sense? Is not this simply to put a lever into the hands of the obstructors? Why should there still be this hesitation? Would not the left wing be enormously stronger in its position if it took a plain stand without reservation for the platform of the Communist International, and on this basis conducted a fight for the majority of the I.L.P. membership?

WHAT still holds back the left wing in the I.L.P. from Communism? This is now the all-important question. Acceptance of the theory and programme of Communism as correct is now generally stated to be agreed. Acceptance of the principles of the Communist International is also generally stated to be agreed. On tactics, where there were points of difference suggested (rejection of the fight for immediate demands as "reformism") these are now giving place with experience to closer and closer agreement. The ultimate necessity of a single revolutionary party and of affiliation to the Communist International is agreed? What remains? What prevents an immediate fight for affiliation to the Communist International and union with the Communist Party? What prevents the immediate reconstitution of the Revolutionary Policy Committee as the Committee for Affiliatio to the Communist International? There is still some hesitation,

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some holding back. Examination of the discussion on Revolutionary Policy in this journal, and of the subsequent Conference which carried on the discussion will reveal some suggested reasons, though not of a very clear political character, but rather of a subjective and personal character, criticism of faults in manner not in basic policy, of the Communist Party, desirability of maintaining the identity of the Independent Labour Party, &c. Nevertheless, a careful consideration of these suggested reasons will show that, beneath their apparently subjective and rather petty character, lie revealed certain basic issues of revolutionary principle which are still not yet clearly understood. This bears especially on the question of the rôle of the revolutionary party. There is a widespread acceptance of the principles and programme of Communism in theory. But the practical meaning and realisation of this theory in the daily fight, and particularly in the methods and organisation of the party, is still not yet understood as an essential part of Communist principles. It is on these questions that we must now concentrate in discussions with Left I.L.P.-ers in order to win them over finally to Communism in practice.

IT is clear from recent discussions that one of the principal issues which still holds back many left I.L.P.-ers, even those who have fully broken with the parliamentary reformism of the official majority policy and declare acceptance in principle of Communism, from realising the necessary outcome of their policy in acceptance of the line of union with the Communist International and with the Communist Party, is *the still widespread lack of understanding of the rôle and necessity of a single leading revolutionary workers' party.* The view is often expressed by left I.L.P.-ers that "ultimately" union in a single revolutionary party will no doubt be necessary, but that "for the present" there is room and scope and advantage to maintain two parties, each with its distinctive historical tradition, its own approach and outlook, and its special contribution to make. Thus one of the speakers at the Labour Monthly Conference on Revolutionary Policy declared :

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> There is no doubt that there cannot ultimately be two revolutionary parties, But although there may not be two parties ultimately, that does not mean to say that you are faced at a given moment with a contradiction because there are two parties which claim to be revolutionary before the revolutionary crisis has reached its sharpest stage. There is everything to be gained during a preliminary period from having parties which are putting forward lines of policy, lines of tactics and of organisation, and who are criticising one another in this hard comradely fashion.

Here is it obvious that we have a conception of the party basically at variance with the Communist conception. If the party is regarded as the general staff of the working-class struggle, such a view as that expressed in the above statement is impossible. There cannot be two general staffs of a single army. Such a view is only possible, if the party is regarded as merely a propagandist group within the working class, expressing a certain viewpoint. On such a hypothesis the multiplicity of groups can be argued an advantage : from the conflict of viewpoints will spring the truth. But this is nothing other than a relic of the parliamentary conception of the party. The " two-party system " belongs to bourgeois politics (where the necessary continuity and unity of command is ensured by the State machine).

THIS view is not peculiar to one or two exponents, but is almost universal at present in the expression of left I.L.P.-ers, and is indeed the only basis on which, if they have once expressed agreement with Communism in principle, they can still oppose union with the Communist Party. We are thus here very close to the root question of the present discussion of revolutionary policy. One of the leaders of the Revolutionary Policy Committee, C. K. Cullen, writes :

> There is a great part for both the I.L.P. and the C.P. to play in and for the working class. The time has not yet come when either can serve the working class best by losing its separate identity.

And in his contribution in our January issue, Jack Gaster writes :

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> Those comrades who say there is no theoretical middle path between the Second and Third Internationals are right; but unfortunately the rules of the Third International make it impossible for two sections in any one country to be affiliated to it, Why, then, if it is felt that the I.L.P. should join the Third International, is it considered impossible to ask I.L.P.-ers to join the C.P.G.B. ? This is not due to a sentimental desire to maintain the I.L.P. as a party simply because it is the I.L.P. No party that is not serving the best interests of the working class has the right to exist, but the Communist Party appears to offer many objections.

He then enumerates his objections to the Communist Party in respect of "jargon," "blind faith in phrases," "virulent misrepresentation," &c., and draws from this the conclusion that if the Communist Party were to overcome these faults, then

> There might be no need for the I.L.P.; but until that is done, there is room for the I.L.P.

Here we have acceptance of the principles of Communism, rejection of the conception of the middle course, acceptance of the necessity of affiliation to the Communist International; nevertheless, because the writer finds faults in the practice of the existing Communist Party, he draws the conclusion, not that these faults should be corrected, but that there should exist two parties, and he even finds it "unfortunate" that the Communist International will not accept the existence of two sections in one country. It is evident that here, despite the declaration of acceptance of Communism, we have a failure to understand the essential principles of Communism, especially with regard to the vital question of the party.

IN order to approach this issue more closely, it is necessary to carry it a stage deeper into the whole conception of the relationship of the party and the class. Current I.L.P. expression, including the left wing, commonly assumes a kind of opposition of interests between the party and the class; sets up the interest of the class as the greater or higher interest, and of the party as the lesser or lower; and affirms its readiness to put the interests of the working class before the "egoist" or "sectarian" interests of the party. Thus Brockway stated at Bradford:

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> The I.L.P. is not actuated by a sectarian spirit ; our main concern is not our Party, but the working class.

This is quoted with approval by the London Divisional Council of the I.L.P., which is dominated by the Revolutionary Policy Committee, in its pamphlet " Blackpool—Bradford—Derby ":

> It may be that unity is impossible between the I.L.P. and the C.P. as organisations, but the objective should be to develop that unity in action between individuals in the two movements which would lead to their co-operation in Workers' Councils. Fenner Brockway stated at Bradford : " the I.L.P. is not actuated by a sectarian spirit ; our main concern is not our party, but the working class " ; and it is in the spirit that, as Socialists, members of the I.L.P. are not concerned with what organisation gives a lead, so long as the lead is the correct one, that this problem should be faced.

Here the hypothetical " Workers' Councils," which are intended to represent the working class as a whole (we refrain for the moment from commenting on this conception, which in fact confuses several important questions), are put forward as decisive ; while Socialists, it is explained, " are not concerned with what organisation gives a lead." (This is in effect a primitive embryonic form of the Cronstadt—actually White Guard—slogan of " Soviets free from Communist Party domination .") In the same way a representative of the Revolutionary Policy Committee at the Conference answered thus the issue of the Communist International :

> Was it possible to do this job without being attached to the Third International ? The answer to the question is a simple one. While desirable that there should be only one International of the working class, the only really possible inter-linking of the working class, is National Workers' Control internationally linked. There is no other real International.

Once again the class is counter-posed to the party ; the ultimate World Workers' Republic is put forward as the answer to the urgent issue of the International of the revolutionary working class in the struggle against capitalism.

CLOSELY connected with this conception of the opposition of the class to the party, or of the higher interest of the class as against that of the party, is the constant complaint of Communist Party " domination " or attempted

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domination of non-party working-class organisations and united front organs. One speaker at the Conference expressed it in this way :

> The Communist Party, although professing a desire to draw in all sections of the working class and all working-class organisations into a united front, has taken good care in every case to maintain its own political dominance. We have been attacked because we are not stressing the rôle of the political party. Equally I attack the Communist Party because it does stress the rôle of the Communist Party leadership in all these forms of struggle.

The non-party and united front bodies, that is to say, in the view of the speaker, should not only be independent and autonomous organisationally, as they are already, but should also be independent of the political leadership of the revolutionary workers' party.

THE final form of this complaint, which through all its varying forms can thus be traced in a single line, against the centralisation of leadership of the non-party working-class organisations in the hands of the Communist Party, is the complaint against the centralisation of leadership also within the Communist Party. Another speaker at the Conference found here the reason why the Revolutionary Policy Committee, although accepting Communist principle and tactics, could not still consider fusion with the Communist Party :

> Sooner or later the I.L.P. revolutionaries will have to face up to the question, " Can we join the Communist Party " ? What stops them at the moment ? What is holding them back ? On the theoretical side of the problem they are coming more and more to the Marxist-Leninist line. On the question of practical tactics they are co-operating along revolutionary lines with the Communist Party and using methods which have to a large extent been tried by that party with more or less success. What is it then which exists in the Communist Party which repels the Revolutionary Policy Committee ? What is this rigidity that the position seems to boil down to ? It seems to me that it consists of the formulation of policy from the top. That is, in the final analysis from the Central Executive of the Communist Party.

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The speaker is here not actually correct in his facts, as subsequent speakers pointed out: no party affords such facilities of free and open discussion, or so much scope for initiative from below, as the Communist Party; and its Congress is not only sovereign in formulating policy, but through the whole system of previous intensive discussion, the Congress Commissions, &c., is able to formulate it with such a closeness of democratic control and reflection of the contribution of every delegation, as would stagger any Labour or I.L.P. Conference. However, the issue may be taken as the issue of the undoubted centralisation of action in the hands of the Central Committee and Political Bureau.

NOW let it be stated with full frankness at the outset that in working practice there is an element of justice behind the complaints here formulated, although the complaints themselves are fully incorrect. That is to say, mistakes have been made, and are made from time to time, by Communists, both in respect of relationship to non-party working-class bodies, and in the actual working of centralisation within the party, which can give rise to justifiable complaints. In relation to non-party bodies there can happen, in place of ideological political leadership, attempts at mechanical control; commandeering or wire-pulling in place of convincing. In the working of centralisation there can happen discouragement of all-important local and individual initiative. The first to attack these mistakes are the Communists themselves; the Communist Party sets them down openly and consciously rights them. On the question of united front bodies the Twelfth Plenum laid down:

> In the practical work of our parties it is necessary to put an end to a number of repeated weaknesses and mistakes which hinder the development of their mass work. . . . There is a lack of bold application of the forms and methods of proletarian democracy for the purpose of building up the united front from below.

"Proletarian democracy" is the essential principle which the Communist International emphasises in all non-party and united front bodies, and directly attacks the parties for their

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fear of losing control and lack of confidence in it, " lack of *bold* application of the forms and methods of proletarian democracy." Similarly, on the question of centralisation mistakes :

> There must be a thorough elimination from the leadership of all branches of party work of *super-centralism*, of the mere issuing of orders.

Against " super-centralism " ; for " proletarian democracy " in united front bodies—these are slogans, not of the critics of Communism, but of the Communist International. The Communist Party as a party is consciously fighting these mistakes. But these mistakes occur for a reason, from the very excess of endeavour to carry out a principle of enormous importance. Even when the practice goes wrong, the principle behind, which the party is trying to achieve, is a hundred times right. This principle is of such supreme importance as to be worth the price of the inevitable occasional mistakes and exaggerations.

WHAT is this principle ? It is the principle of *leadership*, not of the leadership of particular individuals, but of *leadership of a party* as vital to the success of the working-class struggle in every phase, not only in the moment of revolution, but before the revolution, during the revolution and after the revolution, all the time until the last remnants of capitalism are destroyed and socialism is finally established throughout the world. For this principle every Communist will fight to the death. And those who are not yet ready to grasp and maintain this principle, no matter how much they may declare their agreement with the principles of Communism, with revolution, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with Soviets and the rest, are not yet Communists, are not yet Marxist-Leninists. For all the innermost *practical reality* of the fight for Communism is contained in this. Without it Communism becomes a paper theory. And it is this principle that in reality underlies all these issues on controversy concerning " centralisation," " domination " of non-party bodies, " party egoism," " intolerance " of the existence of two parties, &c.

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IF we are serious when we speak about the class-war, the conquest of power, &c., we must recognise the necessity of a single leading party of the working class, not in some remote future, but already in the present struggles confronting the working class. This is so obvious that it should not need stating. Indifference to this question means in the end indifference to conquering the bourgeoisie. The class struggle is not a parliamentary discussion, but a fight. A fight requires organisation and leadership, with disciplined unity and absolute clearness where leadership lies, if we are not to be smashed by the enemy. The character of the organisation and leadership will depend on the character of the fight. A particular strike may be led by a committee of workers in a factory or by a trade union. But the united struggle of the entire working class for the overthrow of capitalism can only be led by a political party of the working class, containing all the most active class conscious workers, who are resolved to act together as a single unit in order to give unity and revolutionary aim to the entire mass struggle. This is the meaning of the party. Once this is understood, it is obvious that to speak of two parties is impossible ; and that all serious revolutionary workers must combine together to work to build up a single party upon a correct political programme, capable of leading and closely united with the masses.

THE working class is not homogeneous. The class and the party cannot be synonymous, so long as capitalism rules (not even completely so, after its overthrow, although then beginning to merge). Capitalist influence is strong within the working class. Economic special interests divide the workers into a multiplicity of grades and sections with conflicting outlooks. The conditions of capitalism create reactionary strata within the working class. Even among the organised workers in the trade unions, themselves a minority of the working class, representing those who have already taken the first steps along the path of class-consciousness, these divisions still strongly reflect themselves. Only the

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most far-seeing, fully class-conscious, politically awakened workers can surmount all these divisions, special interests and inherited prejudices, and express the true permanent interests of the proletariat as a whole, its historical mission and revolutionary line. These have the task and the duty to enlighten, influence and lead the rest of the working class, to combat the reactionary influences and to carry the whole movement forward. The mechanism to accomplish this, the organised lever through which the advanced section of the working class can influence and lead the majority, is the party. *The party is the concentrated consciousness, the principle of self-direction, the memory and the conscience of the working class.* On critical occasions the party may need temporarily to set itself against the stream of the majority in the working class, as at the outbreak of the war, when large sections of the workers were swept away for the moment by capitalist propaganda, and it was the duty of the workers' parties to have combated these prejudices and defended the historical interests of the proletariat. The party is the highest expression of the working class. To endeavour to set up an opposition between the interests of the party and of the working class is the most dangerous reactionary demagogy, the trick of every Conservative propagandist, playing up to exactly what is backward in the working class ; and when I.L.P. leaders stoop to using this poisoned weapon (" our main concern is not our party, but the working class "), the whole membership of the I.L.P. should rise up to stop it. The party is the most precious possession of the working class, and the interest of the party is the highest interest of the working class.

THE party is the expression of the *unity* of the working class struggle. All the divers mass organisations of the working class in every field are a scattered army. Yet they need to fight as a single centralised army if they are to conquer. How is this to be accomplished ? Only through the party. The manifold forces of the bourgeoisie are united, controlled, regulated and centralised through the state machine.

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We have no state machine. Our uniting centralising mechanism is and must be the party. Only if the most active, class-conscious revolutionary workers in all the mass organisations of the working class act together as units of a single directing force, and guide the movements as parts of a single struggle, only so will the entire working class army be united and able to defeat capitalism. To oppose the mass movements to the party, to set them up as alternatives to the party, is thus to do the greatest injury to the working class struggle. As Lenin said :

> The mass-character of the movement does not diminish, but increases our obligations to establish a strong and centralised organisation of revolutionaries capable of leading the preparatory struggle, all unexpected outbursts and the final decisive attack. (Iskra, December 6, 1901 : Collected Works, English Edition, IV. 2, page 69.)

But this means *centralisation of leadership* within all the complex of mass organisations—the very principle of party " domination " of the mass organisations (but by true leadership, by conviction, through the forms of proletarian democracy), to which many left I.L.P.-ers still raise objection, not seeing that this is essential to working-class victory. The principle of *centralisation* (but *democratic* centralism, save where the intensity of the conditions of struggle make necessary temporary suspension of this) right through the working-class struggle up to and including within the party itself, is the principle of the *unity* of the working-class struggle and of the absolute necessity of *unity of command*. To oppose this is to advocate the disarming and disorganisation of the workers and the victory of capitalism.

CERTAINLY we have not yet in Britain the revolutionary workers' party that we need, a party capable of leading the working-class struggle and strongly rooted in the masses. The building of such a party is a big historical process, only reached through a long cycle of struggles and experiences of the working class ; and its achievement reflects a high degree of

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maturity of the working class for revolution. But the revolutionary class-conscious workers united in the Communist Party are step by step, by their work, by their sacrifices, by their participation in the forefront of every struggle, and by the consistently proved correctness of their lead, building up such a party which will become the leading party of the British working class. This can be stated with certainty, because the Communist workers in Britain have alone in the British working class judged correctly the situation, as more and more are now becoming compelled to admit, and because they alone in the British working-class movement know with absolute clearness what they want, and what they want is in accord with the historical needs of the British working class.

STEP by step, through all the vicissitudes of the struggle, this objective will be achieved. Whoever wishes to take part in the tasks of the working-class revolution in Britain must take part in this common work. The revolutionary class-conscious workers in Britain can only advance as a Communist Party. Not only the theory and programme of Communism is correct, but the principles of tactics and organisation which are bound up with the theory of Communism are no less correct and essential for victory. As soon as these principles are understood, every left I.L.P. worker can have no objective save union with the Communist Party, not as some ultimate hypothetical future event, but as an urgent present need. This does not mean disorganisation of the I.L.P. workers, individual dropping out and passing over; the work of organisation through two generations in the I.L.P. should not be lightly thrown away; but *the left wing in the I.L.P. should fight as an organised body on the open basis of the platform of the Communist International to carry the majority over into union with the Communist Party.* That is the only and absolutely necessary path of advance, opening an enormous stage of advance for the whole working class.

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LEFT I.L.P.-ers would do well to consider the experience of the old German Independent Socialist Party, leading up to its final union with the Communist International and the German Communist Party (Spartacists) in 1920. In 1919 the German Independent Socialist Party adopted unanimously a programme of dictatorship of the proletariat and soviets, but rejected union with the Communist International and with the Communist Party. Three wings revealed themselves. The right wing, led by Hilferding, was for dictatorship of the proletariat and for soviets, but against affiliation to the Communist International (we have seen where Hilferding has since developed—an instructive demonstration of how much the "acceptance in principle" of Communism without accepting the practical outcome is worth). The centre was for "negotiations" with the Communist International. The left wing, then small in numbers, was for straightforward affiliation. The centre carried the day, *i.e.*, for negotiation with the Communist International, but ignoring the plain issue of union with the Communist Party. On this decision the Executive of the Communist International addressed itself as follows to the leadership of the Independent Socialist Party:

> The Communist International considers it not only incorrect, but in principle impermissible, that the German Independent Socialist Party, which in fact is taking over the basic ideas of the German Spartacists, and is taking over these ideas tardily, in an inconsistent and incomplete fashion, should in its Congress decisions say no word on union with the German Communist Party (Spartacist League). The unity of the revolutionary proletariat demands such a unification.

In 1920 at the Halle Congress, where Zinoviev spoke as delegate of the Communist International, affiliation to the Communist International was carried by an overwhelming majority, and union with the German Communist Party followed, leading to the formation of the United Communist Party of half a million. We are in Britain at a very much more primitive and undeveloped stage, and the I.L.P. is still very much more backward in its programme; we are not yet at

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the point where the right wing advocates dictatorship of the proletariat, minus union with the Communist Party. But the principle for the left wing of the I.L.P. remains the same. It is no use embracing "in principle" the theory of Communism without embracing its practical outcome—union with the Communist International and union with the Communist Party.

R. P. D.

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THE I.L.P. CONFERENCE

By WILLIAM RUST

THE question of basic policy will again be the centre of attention at the 41st Annual Conference of the Independent Labour Party this month, when at the third conference in succession a struggle will be waged around fundamental principles. The differences within the Party are now much clearer than they were a year ago when the conference delayed the break with the Labour Party and satisfied itself with a hesitant "conditional affiliation." The differences are also much clearer than they were at the time of the special Bradford Conference last August, when the disaffiliationists carried the day against the open right wing by 241 votes to 142.

Disaffiliation did not settle the conflict within the I.L.P., but only brought out more clearly the basic cleavage between the reformist and revolutionary elements. Learning from the mighty events of the last few years and especially from the experience of the Labour Government, the rank-and-file of the I.L.P. are making an exhaustive overhaul of their own views and equipping themselves with new weapons. They are concentrating attention on questions of principle because the facts of life have severely shaken the once unquestioned line of reformism and have forced a search for a new fundamental basis as a guide to action.

The period since the disaffiliation conference has been packed with events full of urgent lessons for every member of the I.L.P. Above all, the advent of Hitler to power, the setting up of the open Fascist dictatorship in Germany reveals the overwhelming urgency of the necessity for united class struggle against capitalism and the tragic consequences of reformist policy. Every active worker feels instinctively the meaning of the German events, knows that a tremendous blow has been struck at the working class of the entire world.

The "democratic republic" of Germany, the land of a mighty organised working class, is now under the heel of a bloody fascist dictatorship and a murderous terror has been let loose. Fascism in Germany is the signal to reaction through the entire world, every rotten reactionary, from the polished parliamentarian of Britain to the brutal hangman of Japan, will now pluck up his courage for new attacks on the toilers. Austria follows hard on the heels of Germany, and everywhere Fascism is on the offensive. But the strengthening of the camp of counter-revolution calls forth a corresponding strengthening of the revolutionary forces. Despite terror and torture the German working class prepares itself for the new phase of the struggle and its Communist Party is steeled

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in the fires of the class struggle. The working class of the world responds to the call of their German brothers and the conviction that revolutionary class struggle is the only way forward finds increasing support.

There is no doubt that the I.L.P. rank-and-file is drawing very direct lessons from the fierce class struggle now raging in Germany, especially as the events confirm with great emphasis the course of developments in Britain itself where the growing mass movement against capitalist misery is meeting with vicious oppression. Every mass action brings the workers up against the state. The Hunger March was marked by the mobilisation of 15,000 police and pitched battles in the West End of London; the Birkenhead struggle against the Means Test was answered by a reign of police terror; in Belfast two unemployed workers were shot dead; during the Lancashire textile strike the police attempted to drive the pickets off the street. This is only the forerunner of what is to come, but it is sufficient to give new hope to the fascist Mosley, who even dares to threaten the working class with machine-guns.

How will the I.L.P. conference face the lessons of these events and how will it sum up the first experiences of the disaffiliation period? There is no mistaking the attitude of the membership; the demand for a real revolutionary policy is growing very rapidly. The leadership, on the other hand, sets itself strongly against the demand and is alternately cajoling and threatening the rank-and-file. Thus a conflict is inevitable.

The most important signs of the growth of the oppositional movement are the resolutions of the London and Lancashire divisions in favour of opening discussions with the Communist International and the Revolutionary Policy Committee's new constitution which includes recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Against these views the leaders have been re-affirming their line of "revolution through parliament" and have worked up a strong propaganda against the "reformist" Communist Party and "Moscow dictatorship."

The chief battle of the conference is likely to take place around the constitution which has been the subject of varying interpretations, some indication of which have already been given with statements made by the leaders during the *New Leader* discussion on Democracy. Two members of the National Administrative Council quite openly declare that they were in favour of leaving the Labour Party for reasons that have nothing in common with revolutionary policy. Allen Skinner, who moved the disaffiliation resolution at Bradford on behalf of the N.A.C., stated:

> The Labour Party had no planning mentality. . . . We broke because we could not get a basis of co-operation with the Labour Party that would give freedom of action to our parliamentary representatives against any possible future repetition of such disastrous absence of Socialist planning. Had we been able to get that freedom of action we should now be in the Labour Party. (*New Leader*, October 2.)

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There is not even a smell of a revolutionary policy about Skinner! His one regret is that the Labour Party has not got enough of the "planing mentality," *i.e.*, the policy of supporting rationalisation, wage cuts and economies in the name of Socialism.

Elijiah Sandham wrote in the same vein:

> The I.L.P. split from the Labour Party has taken place mainly because the Labour Party is handling the parliamentary machine in so feeble a fashion, not because the I.L.P. has ceased to believe in Parliament entirely. (*New Leader*, November 18.)

Thus according to Sandham the decisions of the Bradford Conference had nothing to do with political principle. The only trouble was the "feeble" policy of the anti-working class Labour Government.

These are not simply the undisguised reactionary views of two of the lesser-known leaders (Brockway and Maxton did not contribute to the discussion). On the contrary, they are fully in line with the Bradford constitution which is the child of the entire N.A.C. Some of the other leaders speak more carefully but they cannot conceal their basic parliamentary reformist line.

"The capture of all organs of Government; national and local is essential," says the Bradford constitution, but if the capitalists "resort to some form of dictatorship," the workers must "overcome it by the use of their mass strength for the capture of power." Wherein does the statement differ from the old, old reformist line of win a majority in Parliament and take over the capitalist state machine? All that is added is an undefined reference to the use of "mass strength" (not revolution, be it noted!) against a *future* dictatorship.

Thus, in the opinion of the I.L.P. leadership, there is not dictatorship at present. The leaders persist in presenting an utterly false view of capitalist society.

Let us take this question of the parliamentary way to Socialism a little more in detail as it is the issue upon which the chief differences within the I.L.P. are concentrated. Despite the way the leaders phrased the Bradford constitution the fact remains that the recognition of the failure of the so-called "democratic way to Socialism" was the driving force of the rank-and-file demand for a break with the Labour Party. This issue was raised at Bradford by delegates despite strong official disapproval and it comes out again in the new draft constitution of the Revolutionary Policy Committee, which declares that:

> The I.L.P. will thus endeavour to plan and to pave the way for the setting up of a Workers' Dictatorship upon the attainment of power for the carrying out of working class measures necessary in the transition period.

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This recognition of the workers' dictatorship marks the gulf between the left members of the I.L.P. and the reformist leadership. If a section of the I.L.P. declares for the dictatorship of the proletariat it means that these Socialist workers see the necessity of waging the struggle for Socialism on the basis of the class strength of the working class, they are facing the necessity of fighting for the overthrow of the capitalist state and the setting up of a proletarian state. This line has nothing in common with the Socialism through Parliament policy which, in concrete terms, means wait for the next Election and vote for a third Labour Government.

The strength of the R.P.C.'s constitution is the declaration for the workers' dictatorship, the weakness in the failure to deal with how it shall be achieved. The use of such words as "revolution" and "forcible" are apparently deliberately avoided and, instead of dealing with the struggle against the capitalist state, there is only a vague statement that the "militancy of the workers must therefore be developed with the object of seizing power."

The latest events in Germany will probably give rise to a much more intense discussion amongst the followers of the R.P.C. on the question of the rôle of the capitalist state. Fascism is in power to-day because Social-Democracy kept the majority of the working class enchained to the policy of Socialism through Parliament, not the break up of the capitalist state but its gradual transformation. Unlike the Russian Revolution of 1917 the German revolution a year later did not end the capitalist dictatorship but only secured a more democratic constitution. In place of the policy of class action the Social-Democratic leaders called on the workers not to fight against capitalism but to base their policy on parliamentary combinations, to support one section of the capitalist camp against the other. This is the policy of the "lesser evil" which was responsible for the line of Vote for Hindenburg and keep out Hitler!

And all the time the capitalist class was working towards transforming their democratic dictatorship into an open fascist dictatorship. Through their state power the bourgeoisie systematically attacked the workers and their organisations and encouraged the development of the Hitler movement in order to organise supplementary forces of terrorism. All of this has been done legally! Step by step and by decree after decree the German bourgeoisie prepared the way for the culminating blow against the working class and the ensuring of a parliamentary majority for the Fascist dictatorship. The Socialist leaders who proclaimed that they were gradually transforming the state and marching towards Socialism were unceremoniously bundled out of their parliamentary posts by a lieutenant and a dozen soldiers.

In Germany, history has once again unfolded on a mighty scale the meaning of Marx's teachings on the rôle of the state, teachings which

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are directly repudiated by the new " Marxists " of the I.L.P. leadership. The question of parliamentary action cannot be considered except in relation to the rôle of the capitalist state, which in the words of Marx is the executive organ of the capitalists for dominating the workers and constitutes an armed power. Germany shows that all talk about a parliamentary majority defeating the armed forces and police controlled by the bourgeoisie and supported by the judiciary, church and countless branches of the state machine (not to mention the supplementary forces of oppression), is nothing but a deception of the working class.

Universal suffrage cannot place power in the hands of the working class while the means of production and state power are in the hands of the capitalists. This is the lesson of Germany, this is the lesson of the Labour Government which commenced by promising everything through Parliament and ended by snivelling that it was compelled to attack the workers' standards because of the extra-parliamentary power of the bankers.

This lesson must be driven home by the left I.L.P'ers without a moment's delay. Shall the working class be urged *now* to follow the line of independent class struggle or must we in Britain blind ourselves to Germany's lessons and wait until the open dictatorship is established, *i.e.*, wait for the moment when Fascism is striking us down before we begin to prepare for the overthrow of capitalism by revolutionary struggle ?

The Revolutionary Policy Committee would probably answer this question with an emphatic affirmative but still their constitution does not face the fact that the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat means, *above all, the conscious direction of everyday activity towards this final aim and a bitter daily struggle against reformism in practice.*

To fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat means to make a complete break with all opportunist leaders and openly to proclaim the necessity for an untiring struggle against all those who are trying to disarm the workers in face of the capitalist offensive, especially against those " left " leaders who disguise this policy with revolutionary phrase-mongering ; promises to achieve the revolution through parliament, to organise a fight against a future dictatorship, &c.

But on this vital issue, we find that the constitution of the R.P.C. contains only the following indirect reference :

> The I.L.P. will urge upon the existing industrial and co-operative movements the necessity for this objective (ending of capitalism) and will press for their organisation to this end.

How is this to be achieved ? Only through a struggle against the reformist leaders and the reformist ideology with which the organisations are saturated. Despite the great stirring amongst the working class the

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old reformist ideology still limits and often paralyses the struggle. The leaders continually preach defeatism (futility of strikes, wait for General election, &c.) and deliberately betray the struggle as in the case of the sell out of the Lancashire cotton strikers. They deny any possibility of real advance through mass action and always try to concentrate attention on the so-called parliamentary alternative or the overcoming of the crisis by some new scheme of capitalist reorganisation, possibility of a coming new boom, &c.

The revolt of the rank-and-file against this policy of betrayal is met with splits and expulsions and the leaders do not hesitate to call on the police in order to assist them against the workers as was the case at the Newcastle Trades Union Congress.

These facts are too well known to need further recital and the left I.L.P'ers themselves are continually coming up against such experiences. Why, then, is the issue of the fight against opportunism omitted from the R.P.C.'s constitution? Apparently because the R.P.C. has not yet drawn the full and logical lessons of its own experiences. The R.P.C. puts forward the revolutionary idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it avoids facing the fact that this line must be fought for against all those leaders who are opposed to the policy of revolutionary class struggle.

But although the necessity for a fight against, and complete separation from, all opportunist leaders and the unity of all revolutionaries in one Party is not yet recognised in the constitution, the London and Lancashire resolutions in favour of approaching the Comintern show that the idea has already got a firm grip. The lecture memorandum of the London Division on the united front also speaks about the need for a "single revolutionary party" in the future. The question of breaking away from all leaders who refuse to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and to carry out this line in daily practice is now coming up as the decisive question in the I.L.P.

At this month's Easter Conference the question of the unification of all revolutionary workers in one united section of the Communist International will have to be discussed in one form or another. The march of events has shown that this is the basic unavoidable issue before the I.L.P. rank-and-file. The achievement of this unity is the task for which every revolutionary should now labour might and main. The working class cannot afford to wait.

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THE BELFAST RAILWAY STRIKE

By WILLIAM COWE

ON July 19, 1932, the Irish Railway Companies intimated to the Unions their desire to have an early meeting of the respective representatives to discuss the financial position of those companies.

The meeting took place in London on August 2, 1932, at which the Irish Rail Companies' representatives, along with those from the N.U.R., A.S.L.E. & F. and the R.C.A., considered the suggestion, put forward by the companies, for reducing the earnings of all employees to 100 per cent. above the pre-war level or alternatively a 20 per cent. reduction in wages.

The definite proposals made at the same meeting were as follows:

> All grades, other than Supervisors, Station-masters, Goods Agents, Clerks and Juniors, to be reduced to the level of 100 per cent. above pre-war in two instalments of:
>
> (i) 15 per cent. below rates in operation prior to May, 1931, commencing first full pay period following November 26, 1932.
>
> (ii) Such further reduction, if any, to bring rates of pay to 100 per cent. over the average pre-war rates, to have effect from the commencement of the first full pay period following May 27, 1933.
>
> *With regard to Station-masters, Goods Agents, Supervisors, Clerks, &c.:* 10 per cent. commencing first full pay period following November 26, 1932; further 5 per cent. commencing first full pay period following May 27, 1933.

Such drastic proposals however had to be rejected by the Unions. Immediately three months' notice, in accordance with the Irish Wages Board decision of June 8, 1931, which reduced railwaymen's earnings by $4\frac{3}{8}$ per cent., was given by the Companies as from August 26, 1932.

On November 24, 1932, the Wages Board issued its award, arrived at by the casting vote of the "impartial" chairman, Mr. Justice Wylie. This award gave the Companies a 10 per cent. reduction in rates below the rates in operation prior to May 9, 1931. This reduction was to operate on all grades, except juniors and passenger road transport men, and was to take effect from the commencement of the first full pay period following December 26, 1932.

From the very outset the railwaymen expressed a very firm attitude on the matter of wage cuts and showed inflexible opposition to the claims or demands of the railway companies. As each of the foregoing steps

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were taken, in consideration of the Companies' demands, this resentment and opposition on the part of the Irish railway workers grew more determined and widespread until the Wages Board made its award for the 10 per cent. reduction and then the demand was taken up by all the branches of the Unions in Ireland for immediate strike action.

To this widespread resentment to wage cuts and the demand for strike action, can be attributed the moves that were then made by the Government, Union officials, &c., to split up and divide the railwaymen and prevent them from resorting to strike action.

The Free State Government Party, Fianna Fail, had just emerged from a General Election and were in the midst of a devastating economic warfare with the vicious imperialist demands of the National Government in Great Britain, and to have a railway strike in Southern Ireland was going to be a blow with serious repercussions. So the Free State Government stepped in with its offer to give a subsidy to the Companies whose lines ran over the Free State. This subsidy made up to the Companies concerned the difference between the present cut in operation of $4\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. and the 10 per cent. award of the Wages Board: such a subsidy to continue until April 30, 1933.

The N.U.R. Executive Committee, the principal Union, called a special meeting of representatives from every branch in Ireland on December 10, 1932, and there the whole position of the Free State Government's offer was presented by the Union leaders in such a fashion as to prevent any decision being taken for strike action. The Union officials were successful in getting an adjournment of the meeting until December 18, to enable them to negotiate with the Northern Ireland Government and Railway Companies regarding the example shown by the Free State Government.

From that time onwards the Trade Union leaders exerted every effort and device to get a settlement. But their efforts came to nought until January 23 came round when notices were posted declaring that the Companies in Northern Ireland intended to operate the full 10 per cent. award. Another week's respite for the Union officials, as a result of the intervention of the Ministry of Labour, showed how anxious they were to negotiate a compromise. In desperation the last offer made by those officials to the Companies was a $5\frac{5}{8}$ per cent. reduction, this being $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. greater than that which was then in operation. The Companies threw out this offer.

Those officials were then forced, by the resentment of the railwaymen who had never wavered one iota in their opposition to wage cuts, to give the signal for strike action.

The magnificent response of the men for strike action, followed in similar fashion by the men employed on the Free State part of the

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Northern Ireland Railway Companies who come within the subsidy of the Free State Government and therefore did not come under operation of the 10 per cent. cut until April 30, 1933, is indicative of the actual wealth of feeling which has existed throughout among the Irish railwaymen.

This splendid and remarkable strike of the Irish railwaymen is now reaching, as I write this article, its seventh week of duration, and to-day, just as at its commencement, the tenacity of the strikers is grim and dogged, and their fighting spirit places them among the foremost fighters of to-day.

To really understand and appreciate this situation it is necessary to trace the rôle of the whole trade union bureaucracy in this strike.

Let us take Belfast, the biggest town in Northern Ireland, and here we get a picture of all the forces at work within and around the strike, factors which are at play and which determine in the main the whole tendency of the strike.

Here in Belfast are to be found the Joint Executive Committees (N.U.R. and A.S.L.E. & F.) and the higher Union officers, housed in two of the finest hotels, the headquarters for the joint Executive Committees being the Royal Avenue Hotel.

Then there is the Central Strike Committee which is composed of representatives of the three N.U.R. and two A.S.L.E. & F. branches in Belfast. This Committee has functioned in such a fashion that it does all the " donkey " work, from arranging for picketing, receiving telephone calls and wires and reports from outside districts to the issuing of a daily bulletin.

Right from the start this Committee has been influenced on matters of policy, &c., by the Joint E.C.'s and this to such a degree that it has become long since an impotent body so far as organisation and leadership of the strike is concerned.

The militant chairman of the Committee, along with another militant member, have consistently pursued an active fighting policy, but just as consistently have they met with a stone wall in the form of the other elements on the Committee, who use an automatic vote to kill any proposals for strengthening the strike front.

The joint E.C.'s and officials are responsible for this state of affairs, and their dark history in this strike, so far as it has gone, must receive the " light of day " for every intelligent, active and class-conscious trade unionist in Britain.

Following on their offer of a $5\frac{5}{8}$ per cent. reduction, their last act prior to the strike being called, those officials and E.C.'s have carried out

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a policy of moulding the strike as simply a railwaymen's fight, retarding its development, opposing every proposal put forward for consolidating the strike front while at the same time energetically and anxiously seeking for, on the basis of offers of wage cuts, an early settlement of the dispute.

When the demand was taken up by the strikers for an appeal to the dockers and carters, who were in full sympathy with the railwaymen in their fight, to come into the struggle it was met by the opposition of the officials. The Trades Dispute Act, the stepping-in of the Government and the cancellation of the funds of the Union were the arguments used to scotch the idea of an extension of the strike to other workers.

Also, with the offer of the Out-door Relief and Unemployed workers to give any assistance to the strikers, the joint E.C.'s, through their henchmen on the Strike Committee were able to sow fears and doubts about the rise of " hooliganism," shooting of policemen, rioting, &c., in order to prevent the forces of the unemployed from playing a big part in the struggle.

Each proposal for strengthening and consolidating the strike was met with those arguments which indicate the whole tendency in the strike, and that is, of " localising " the struggle, preventing its development and by so doing weakening the whole effectiveness of the strike which alone can bring victory in the strikers' interests.

But the bureaucracy of the Railway and Transport Unions have, by their policy of " localising " and isolating the railwaymen on strike, prevented the united action of the dockers and carters with the railwaymen and so the one big step giving to the Rail strike an effectiveness which would inevitably ensure a rapid and successful issue for the railwaymen has not been accomplished.

Just as those officials of the N.U.R. and A.S.L.E. & F. defeat each successive step to strengthen and extend the strike they at the same time come forth with all their demagogy in order to create confusion in the minds of the strikers, smooth over the matters of policy, in order to hide and conceal the attempts which are being made and contemplated to bring the strike to an end.

At all the mass meetings, in speeches and statements to the press those officials soar to great heights with their eulogies of the fighting spirit and grim determination of the strikers. Those appraisements of the wonderful solidarity of the men coupled with the variety of phrases which are used, seemingly in a fighting and sincere tone of voice, such as " Steady men : stand firm : fight on and Victory is ours ! " ; " Our Slogan is ' Defence not Defiance ' " ; " Are we Downhearted ?—No ! " ; " Will we Fight on to Victory ?—Yes ! " are part of the demagogy of those leaders which serve to divert the minds of the strikers and others concerned,

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in a spirit of enthusiasm, away from the crux of the problem, the question of: for or against wage cuts as a basis for settlement of the dispute.

Such demagogy hides and obscures the real issue at stake and so we have the whole trade union bureaucracy, when talking about a settlement of the dispute, using the vaguest of language which means anything.

Typical examples of this phraseology are to be found in the statements of Messrs. Dobbie, Cramp, Squance, Allen, &c., when they talked about "a reasonable settlement," "an honourable basis for agreement," "a fair basis of settlement," &c. Mr. C. D. Watters, Irish Secretary of the N.U.R., in issuing a statement on behalf of the joint E.C.'s in the third week of the strike, says that the Unions are prepared to negotiate a settlement of the dispute "on a satisfactory basis."

Not once during the whole dispute have those officials declared or stated from the platform that they stood four-square with the strikers and their demands for "the total abolition of the 10 per cent. wage cut." Which goes to prove that their talk about a decent or honourable settlement is something distinct and apart from the spirit of the men.

Mr. Squance (Assistant General Secretary of A.S.L.E. & F.) was much embarrassed and very angry when, on repeated questioning about the meaning of "a decent settlement" he had to give the answer that it meant anything "inside the 10 per cent. cut." On that basis the Unions are, as Mr. Dobbie, President N.U.R., put it at a public meeting held in Belfast on the fifth week of the strike, "ready, able and willing to negotiate a suitable settlement."

The Companies have been, from the start, adamant for the full 10 per cent. cut and the strikers more adamant for the total withdrawal of the 10 per cent. cut. The Union officials then, in making their plea of preparedness on their part to negotiate, have tried to make out the Companies as the rogues in the play.

Mr. Cramp appeals to Major Spier, of the Companies, to "come off the 10 per cent." and, in a letter to the Major signed by Messrs. Cramp and Squance, the Unions talk about "reasonable proposals" for a settlement. Certain offers of greater wage cuts have been made by the Union officials to the Companies. What the actual figure is is not disclosed, but in any case it is sufficiently substantial enough to make Mr. J. M. Andrews, Minister of Labour, state in the Ulster Parliament on March 14:

> In fact, I do not hesitate to say that I have known from the very beginning that the Unions were ready to compromise.

Therefore the rôle of the Trade Union bureaucracy, when stripped of all its demagogy, is one of treachery and betrayal of the living standards of the striking Irish Railwaymen, the same fate as workers in practically

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every other section of industry in Great Britain have experienced when in active struggle with the employing classes. That treachery of the bureaucracy will always succeed in the measure that the workers in the struggle do not prepare and take the necessary steps to wrest from the bureaucracy the leadership and control of the strike struggles and on the basis of rank-and-file independent leadership exercised from the depots, sheds, factories, &c., carry forward the struggle in the spirit of the workers.

This struggle to challenge the policy and leadership of the Trade Union officials is developing in the Irish Rail Strike. Big handicaps to its growth, however, are being met with. Prior to the strike being called no organised rank-and-file movement in the trade union branches and in the stations, sheds and depots had been brought together. Therefore when strike action took place the bureaucracy and its policy of " compromise " were unchallenged in moulding the strike and securing its tendency accordingly.

The course of the strike however has, during its seven weeks' duration, shown the imperative necessity of the militants gathering their forces together in order to go forward in an organised fashion to raise issues for strengthening the strike front, extending it to other important sections of workers while at the same time making clear to the mass of strikers the tendencies in the strike and so win them over for virile struggle against the traitorous rôle of the bureaucracy.

In Belfast, Dublin and Dundalk those militants have now been brought together and in the days that are to come there can be no doubt of a good development on the lines set out above.

Certain successes already have to be recorded, although the present preponderating element of reaction on the Belfast Central Strike Committee has attempted to sabotage them in the course of being carried out. To mention them : there is the leaflet containing an appeal for solidarity action, 5,000 of which were distributed to the dockers and carters, then the evening demonstration of railwaymen through the principal streets in Belfast, and the very important decision of the Belfast Committee to call a meeting of all Strike Committees to take place at Dundalk on Sunday, March 19.

This latter decision was met with opposition from the joint E.C.'s who realise, quite rightly, that such a joint meeting of Strike Committees can accomplish much in the direction of consolidating the strike and deal a blow at the policy so sedulously propagated, with all its demagogic settings, by the bureaucracy.

Right from the commencement of the strike both the Northern Government and the Government of the Free State attempted to terrorise the strikers by patrolling the roads with armoured cars manned with troops in full war kit and machine guns.

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The few scab trams, buses and lorries that have been run, have been accompanied by armed police and detectives and even escorted by armoured cars.

After an explosion on the Great Northern Railway the police raided the houses of the railwaymen and of members of the Revolutionary Workers' Groups. It is reported that the troops guarding the railways have been given orders to shoot anyone considered to be behaving suspiciously on railway property.

In fact the State, with its armed forces, has fully co-operated with the railway companies in their efforts to break the strike.

* * * * * *

Those then are the important features of the Irish Rail Strike and to the whole Irish working class the outcome of strike means much.

Victory for the Railway Companies at this stage would immediately encourage the employers in the other sections of the transport industry to drive forward with similar demands for cutting the wages and lowering the conditions of their employees. The dockers and carters, tram and busmen, &c., are next in turn and a defeat for railway workers would, by no means, put them in a better position to meet successfully such attacks from their respective employers.

The operation of the 10 per cent. award on the railways in Ireland would mean that many, many railway workers would be lowered to approximately 30s. 7d. per week. Such a level obtained by the employers in one industry must inevitably have a reflex in wages and conditions prevailing in all other industries. A wholesale onslaught on the standard of living of all employed workers therefore depends upon the success of the railway companies over the railwaymen in this struggle.

Not only is this the actual situation confronting the employed workers but to the unemployed and out-door relief workers the self-same danger of attack is imminent. What would the Government authorities in the form of the Board of Guardians do with a worker, on relief or task work, who receives the maximum scale of relief, *i.e.*, 32s. for man, wife and family over three, if a railway worker for a full week's work receives only 30s. 7d. ?

The answer is obvious. To retain the increases in scales of relief won as a result of the magnificent struggle on the streets of Belfast last October for the out-door relief workers then every effort must be made to ensure that the railwaymen win out in this strike.

Therefore to the whole employed and unemployed working class the rail strike has real class significance which necessitates the tearing down and destroying of the barriers being built up, around the railwaymen in their fight, by the whole Trade Union leadership in Northern Ireland,

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and so allow for the growth and development of real joint working class unity in the struggle. Such accomplishments as the bringing of the dockers, carters, bus and tram men into the strike would give it the real effectiveness which must lead to complete victory for the railwaymen.

In Britain also eyes are fixed on the struggle of the Irish railwaymen. The British railwaymen have been threatened by further cuts in their wages and at any moment the Railway Companies can start to operate the award of the Wages Board's Chairman (Morris) which the Railway Companies have now agreed to.

They have not operated the Chairman's findings for two or three reasons, the first of those being the present solid fighting determination and opposition to wage cuts being demonstrated by the Irish railwaymen. Those companies however are ruthlessly pushing forward their rationalisation policy and by means of pooling schemes, &c., are effecting the most drastic economies at the railway workers' expense. New schemes are about to be launched by the Companies in pursuance of this policy and one of the next steps will take place in Parliament, when the recommendations of the Salter Report are considered with regard to road and rail co-ordination of service.

However, it must not be forgotten that the Wages Board with its chairman, Sir Harold Morris, has given a finding for further wage cuts, and if the Irish railmen are forced back to work on a 7, 8, 9 or even 10 per cent. cut then nothing will stop the British Companies from bringing into operation those findings of the Chairman.

The Irish railwaymen's fight has bearing and significance to every worker in Ireland, Scotland and England, and if full success is to be on the side of the railwaymen, then every militant class-conscious member of the working class must take every possible and immediate step to bring into the arena in practical support of the Irish railwaymen his Trade Union branch and District Council, his Trades Council, his N.U.W.M., C.P., I.L.P., or Labour Party branch and so weld closer in a united front of all workers which will ensure victory for the strikers in this the most vital economic struggle in Britain to-day.

It only remains to be remembered that the Irish railwaymen's slogan is " Not a Penny off Wages."

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THE GERMAN SITUATION

By R. F. ANDREWS

THE *seizure of power by Hitler and the erection of an open Fascist dictatorship in Germany is an indication of the desperate economic and political position of the German capitalist class.* The Fascist terror is a sign not of capitalist strength, but capitalist decay. The economic position of Germany is worse than ever. Industry shows a record low level of output, the balance of trade and of payments is worse than 12 months ago, and the agricultural crisis—as revealed in the fall of prices, the increasing burden of mortgages, more numerous bankruptcies—is also becoming steadily worse. The crisis itself brought to nothing the attempt of the German bourgeoisie between November and January to carry out a " democratic " manœuvre through the government of the " super-Party " general, Von Schleicher, who was to be " fair to all classes." The German capitalists had not the means at their disposal to buy off even a substantial section of the exploited and hungry workers, the starving unemployed, the ruined peasantry and lower middle class. The continuing swing to the left of the masses had already shown itself menacingly at the November 6 elections, when the Communists received 6,000,000 votes, and in the unofficial, but thereby all the more significant, strike of 22,000 Berlin transport workers under revolutionary leadership. Only the most savage terror unhampered by parliamentary formalities, and relying upon murder gangs untrammelled by any legal machinery, remained to the capitalist class—as always in such moments. The Hitler Government is a government of civil war against the open revolutionary temper of the workers (shown by the huge Communist vote of nearly 5 millions retained amidst the most savage repressions and provocations).

The gradual establishment of Fascist rule in Germany has come by " constitutional methods," thereby giving an object lesson of the futility and fraud of contrasting capitalist " democracy " with capitalist dictatorship. To the two year's rule of the Centre Government of Dr. Brüning, ruling largely through presidential decrees under article 48 of the Constitution (the German " Emergency Powers Act "), succeeded the seven months' government by the Nationalists, Von Papen and Von Schleicher, through Cabinets themselves appointed by presidential decree under the same clause. The Brüning Government was itself the dictatorship of big business, in large measure not through Parliament, but directly through the State bureaucracy: the Nationalist " presidential " governments,

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represented a big step further in the same direction, ruling by Fascist methods in spite of a hostile parliament: and the final presidential government of Hitler has only taken the last step, by wiping out Parliament altogether. Even this was done by the strictly "constitutional" methods of a General Election—in which the real capitalist power which makes bourgeois democracy a farce was displayed as never before (through control of the press, wireless, films, police, ballot boxes, legal suppression of opponents, &c.). The importance of these facts for British workers is that British capitalism has its own "article 48" in reserve for just such cases, in the shape of the King, the Privy Council and the House of Lords, which can and will take the same action in Britain (as in India through the "special powers," Egypt through "reserved subjects," Cyprus and Ceylon by cancelling the constitution) when capitalist rule is in danger. The Hitlerite murder gangs have their British precedent in the Black-and-Tans.

The German Social-Democratic leaders have played a decisive part in the gradual establishment of Fascist power in Germany. After the war they saved the country for capitalism by holding the workers back from a Socialist revolution in 1919, and by helping to suppress the workers' risings. When the world crisis struck Germany and the gradual move towards Fascism began, it was the Social-Democrats who put forward the idea of the *lesser evil*—"tolerating" Brüning for fear of Von Papen, supporting Marshal Hindenburg for fear of the Fascists, "loyally co-operating" with Von Papen and Von Schleicher as a "lesser evil" than Hitler—and thus creating the illusion among the workers that these were alternatives to Fascism instead of stepping-stones to it. The social Democrats supported these "alternatives" by more than votes in Parliament. The shooting down of May Day demonstrators in 1929 by the Social-Democratic chief of the Berlin police, Zorgiebel: the assurance of the Social-Democratic leader Severing, in the winter of 1930, that he was moving the readoption of the "law for defence of the Republic" (the equivalent in its scope of the British D.O.R.A.) only as a precaution against the workers, not against the Nazis: the repeated refusal of the Social-Democratic trade union leaders to organise strikes against wage-cuts, once Government arbitration had interfered—all of these followed logically from the theory of the *lesser evil.* And the same policy determined their refusal of the repeated united front proposals of the Communist Party—against capitalist attacks (in April, 1932), for an anti-Fascist majority bloc in the Prussian Parliament (June, 1932), for a General Strike against Von Papen (July, 1932), for strike action against Von Papen's emergency decrees lowering wages (October, 1932), in support of the Berlin transport strikers (November, 1932), and for a General Strike against Hitler (January, 1933), to quote only a few. In

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particular, their definite denunciation of a General Strike against Hitler —at a time when the bulk of the organised workers still followed the Social-Democrats—set the seal on their betrayal of the working class to Fascism. The moves now opening for an " understanding " between the Social-Democrats and Hitler, over the ruins of the old trade union machinery, follow naturally.

The coming to power of Hitler has greatly accentuated the contradictions of international capitalism and increased the war peril. The ruin caused by the Versailles Treaty has played too important a part in deepening the crisis for the German capitalists not to place its revision in the fore-front of their programme. The big industrialists helped Hitler to come to power by, amongst other things, financing his huge machine for propaganda against Versailles among the ruined lower middle classes and despairing poor. In July, 1932, the Nationalist, Von Papen, already offered France the services of German cannon fodder against the U.S.S.R. in exchange for German rearmament: but the provinces taken from Germany by France and Poland stand in the way of any agreement to such a scheme by French Imperialism. On the other hand, the Hitlerite propagandist, Rosenberg, has long been advocating a German-Italian British bloc against France and the U.S.S.R. It was not accidental that British bankers renewed the German " standstill agreement " (post-ponement of debt payments to foreign creditors) immediately after Hitler came to power—just as they gave the Russian Tsar £90 millions credit to effect the counter-revolution in 1906. The standstill agreement was followed by the MacDonald plan for reducing armaments of all European Great Powers but Britain, and rearming Germany: and by the Mussolini plan—accepted by MacDonald—for creating a " Concert of Europe " composed of Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain, *i.e.*, breaking up French military domination of Europe. Not only has this brought immensely increased tension between France and Germany, but it has been reflected in greatly increased tension between the lesser satellites of French Imperialism—the " Little Entente " (Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia)—and Austria and Hungary, who are being armed by Italy; not to speak of Germany, which has opened an economic war against Czecho-Slovakia, and menaces the Polish " corridor." The capitalist politicians themselves are compelled (in pursuit of their several policies) to compare Europe to a huge powder-magazine, threatened by sparks at a dozen different points.

The threat of British imperialist war against the U.S.S.R. has become much more menacing. The alignment of Fascist Germany with the National Government in Britain is of considerable assistance to the war plans against the Soviet Union, particularly of British Imperialism. Although there have been many acts of hostility to, and provocation of,

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the U.S.S.R. by British Governments, the latter had to reckon with revolutionary working-class action in Germany which would effectively stop a war. The setting-up of a Fascist dictatorship in Germany—if it is able to consolidate its power and really break the working-class movement—clears the road for action. Support for the Fascist Government by Great Britain was therefore in the natural order of things—and so was the outrageously provocative action by the British Government on the question of the Metropolitan-Vickers arrests in Moscow. The insulting references of British Cabinet Ministers to the Soviet courts: the impudent attempt to interfere in Soviet internal affairs, and override Soviet laws where British subjects are concerned: the attempts at coercion by breaking off trade negotiations, and threatening an embargo on Soviet imports and a diplomatic rupture: the unbridled slander and war campaign of the capitalist press—all point to one conclusion. British Imperialism is driving ahead for war on the Soviet Union as rapidly as the international alignment of capitalist forces will permit. Nor is it without significance that the British Government's action has been followed by a renewal of Japanese war talk and a provocative note to the U.S.S.R. alleging military support of the "anti-Manchukuo" (*i.e.*, the Chinese national) forces.

The immediate future holds out the prospect of intense class conflict in Germany itself, and of sharper antagonisms in the ranks of the dictatorship itself. The German working-class has retained its fighting forces still intact. Betrayed by its Social-Democratic leaders at the crucial moment, still unconvinced in its decisive sections of the need to follow the Communists (the C.P. had only 12-15 per cent. of its members in factories, and its trade union work was not entirely satisfactory, which led to many weaknesses), the German proletariat has not been in action against the Hitler dictatorship, as a whole. But the fact that the Communist Party has been able to reorganise itself on an illegal basis in the heart of the working class, the numerous isolated political strikes which took place against the Hitler Government in Berlin, Hamburg, Lübeck, Saxony, show that the forces of the working class are gathering for resistance to the Fascist terror. At the same time, the Hitler Dictatorship has not been able in any way to alleviate the crisis or even prevent its deepening. Trade, industry, agriculture, unemployment, present ever more acute problems. The economic measures already adopted to meet the demands of the Hitlerites' Nationalist allies—the great landowners and rich farmers—consist of higher tariff barriers against foreign fats and other produce, which can only have the effect of (i) raising the cost of living for the masses (ii) reducing Germany's export markets and intensifying the general world crisis. The wage-cuts which the great industrial magnates are demanding must precipitate conflicts which cannot be simply

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crushed with the revolvers and crowbars of the storm-troopers. And the crisis itself is likely to widen the breach, already in existence, between the various groups of the bourgeoisie themselves, over such measures as tariff policy, inflation, &c.

The need of the moment for British workers is a united class front of struggle in defence of the German workers, against Fascism, against the rapidly increased peril of war, and against the attacks on our own conditions. The reply of the Labour Party and T.U.C. to the Communist Party's united front proposals is a characteristic piece of strike-breaking. It blames the German Communists for the success of Hitlerism, and ignores the repeated attempts of the German Communists to establish a united front against Hitlerism (with many local successes). It describes the horrors of Fascist dictatorship, but refuses a united front to fight that dictatorship as "a trap." It talks about majority rule and "the powers of the Democratic State," and ignores the obvious lesson of the German events—that the Democratic State, whether administered by Social-Democrats as in 1919 or not, means capitalist dictatorship concealed or open. At the very moment when the British capitalists are whipping up jingo hatred of the U.S.S.R., the National Joint Council plays their game—as in August, 1914—by speaking of "Communist Dictatorship" in the same breath as Fascism, and ignoring the fact—recorded by their own Delegation in 1924—that the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. means immeasurably more *real* democracy —for the people and not for the rich—than prevails anywhere else in the world. A similar piece of strike-breaking is the article by Trotsky in the *Manchester Guardian*, which admits that the Social-Democrats "summoned the Fascists to power through Hindenburg," and then attacks the Communist Party for refusing to make a united front with them. Trotsky not only ignores the numerous united front proposals and achievements initiated by the Communists, but incidentally whitewashes the Social-Democratic leaders who murdered Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, suppressed the workers' risings of 1919, 1921 and 1923, shot down the Berlin workers in 1929, &c., by such remarks as "social democracy is unthinkable without parliamentary government." In the drive for a real class united front against capitalism which is now developing (through the demonstrations organised by the C.P. and I.L.P., the mass opposition movements in the unions, the success of the Anti-War Movement and the London May Day Committee, the growth of the F.S.U.) the exposure of such strike-breakers as the Labour Party Executive, General Council and Trotsky is an essential part of the political armament of the workers.

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The World of Labour

	Page
Britain: Labour Monthly Conference on Revolutionary Policy	257
International: For the United Front against Fascism! - -	267

BRITAIN

"Labour Monthly" Conference on Revolutionary Policy

I.—R. P. DUTT'S LETTER TO THE CONFERENCE

Dear Comrades,

At this Conference we need to discuss with extreme urgency the problems of revolutionary policy in Britain.

The tasks of the united front struggle, of common resistance to the increasing offensive of reaction and war throughout the world, at present dominate the situation. In this common struggle all workers, whether reformist or revolutionary, need to unite and fight as one without distinction of organisation or outlook.

But this immediate fight against the capitalist attack is inseparably bound up with the whole line of fight of the working class against capitalism and for the victory of socialism. Where must the mass struggle of the workers lead? How must we reach to the conquest of power? What are the necessary tactics? What is the necessary organisation? It is to these basic questions, arising directly out of the present crisis and out of the present immediate struggle, that the vanguard of the workers, the politically conscious workers, the socialist workers, must be able to give the answer and to guide the struggle forward to the future revolutionary battles.

It is clear to all that the working class movement in Britain has reached a great turning. The secession of the Independent Labour Party from the Labour Party means that Labourism now stands condemned in the eyes of an increasing proportion of the politically conscious workers. What is to succeed Labourism? What must be the line of fight for Socialism? This is now the supreme question confronting all left workers.

Those of us who are Communists are convinced that the only line of advance, the only alternative to Labourism, is the line of Marxism-Leninism, of Communism, the unification of all the revolutionary workers in a single party as a section of the Communist International.

Many within the Independent Labour Party are not yet convinced of this, but feel still that there is a possible alternative or middle path, and scope for a party between the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

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This issue—the issue of Communism or Centrism—is the heart of the present controversy around which all the special questions of tactics and organisation revolve.

At this Conference we shall endeavour to hammer out these questions together, whether I.L.P. members, Communists or non-party workers, in informal and comradely discussion. We shall fight hard the issues of principle which need to be cleared, but we shall not let the fight of principles turn into a quarrel of organisations. Our supreme aim in this discussion is to clear the path towards reaching a common solution of common problems, towards reaching the common line which is essential to the victory of the revolutionary working class.

One thing is clear and can be agreed by all. The fight facing the working class is serious. There must be absolute clearness of the line. There is no room for vagueness, ambiguity, half-way decisions, the use of easy "revolutionary" phrases as the answer to hard, sharp, practical questions. We must reach precise, concrete answers. And we must reach agreed answers. There is no room for "agreement to differ." In the actual struggle it is not possible to follow two lines. *There can only be one line of the revolutionary working class.* It is just for this reason that issues must be fought out without flinching in order to reach ultimate unity on a basis of absolute clearness of line.

The greatest danger, particularly in view of the traditions and habits of the political working class movement in Britain, which has been brought up in the school of reformist evasion, is *the danger of half-way answers, of ambiguity*, of failure to face issues. This can be illustrated in two of the general issues of the present controversy, the question of parliamentarism and the question of pacifism.

The parliamentarism of the Labour Party, that is, the doctrine of the peaceful advance to socialism through parliament, is now rejected on all sides and seen through as in reality fusion with the capitalist state. It is seen that the struggle for socialism will necessarily be a mass struggle outside constitutional forms. Nevertheless the Marxist-Leninist line of revolutionary parliamentarism, of the use of parliament and elections only as a tribune of agitation for carrying forward the mass struggle, is not yet fully accepted. There is still the hope frequently expressed that the "capture of parliamentary government" may be "partly useful" to strengthen the working class position in an extra-constitutional fight. But this desire to get the best of both worlds inevitably means in practice to fall back to Labour parliamentarism. On just the basis of this reasoning, the watchword of the official leadership of the Independent Labour Party, immediately after all the "revolutionary" decisions at Bradford, is given out as: "Capture of a parliamentary majority." The absence of a clear revolutionary line means in practice the return to the old line. There is no alternative.

Or again, pacifism. Bourgeois pacifism is rejected. That pacifism means surrender to bourgeois force is recognised. The necessity of struggle, of victory by force, is recognised. But once again pacifism reappears in the definition of the mass struggle. A line is attempted to be drawn against civil war, against armed struggle. The mass struggle must be confined to "industrial" limits. Or, it is argued, if ultimately civil war becomes inevitable, we must accept it; but we must try first all other methods. Or, "if" the bourgeoisie resorts to violence, then we shall act, &c. All these attempts to postpone a clear answering of the issue until the last moment, when it is

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too late to prepare, means in fact to guarantee the unpreparedness and defeat of the proletariat. The value of all the promises of the bourgeoisie to act "if" the bourgeoisie begins to smash the constitution, &c., is sufficiently shown in the Hitler experience in Germany.

The fight for sharp and clear answers beforehand to all the basic issues of the workers' struggle is not dogmatism or doctrinairism. It is a matter of life and death for the success of the working class struggle.

The principal immediate issues confronting the Conference are the issues of tactics and of organisation. The discussion has shown that it is here where the ground is still uncleared, and where the biggest practical divergencies reveal themselves between Left I.L.P'ers and Communists.

Two issues in particular here stand out which require careful discussion.

The first is the relation of the immediate struggle and of partial struggles, of the fight for immediate demands, to the fight for socialism. Here it is commonly in quarters where reformism has been most recently abandoned that the abstract utopian revolutionary tendency most frequently appears, the rejection of partial struggles as reformism, and the conception of the path to socialism as a path of pure agitation and propaganda building up a body of disciples. The understanding of the revolutionary significance of partial struggles, and of the correct revolutionary utilisation of them as the means of mass agitation and organisation and of the revolutionisation of the mass of the workers through experience, is the indispensable key to practical revolutionary policy.

The second is the issue of revolutionary discipline, of centralisation, both nationally and internationally, of democratic centralism. Here the old social-democratic conceptions of a loose parliamentary and propagandist party die hard. The present conditions of struggle require different methods. The Leninist conception of the revolutionary workers' party, of its leading rôle in every phase of the workers' struggle, of its necessary basis in the workers in industry, of its combination of democracy and centralism, needs to be explained again and again, especially in England, where it is still largely unfamiliar save in the current bourgeois and social-democratic caricatures of "machine discipline," "dictatorship," "Moscow orders," &c.

There are also present remains of national prejudices, which express themselves in insistence on the peculiarity of British conditions as a reason for opposition to international ("Russian") control; here opposition to the principle of a centralised international takes on a British national guise.

These are only a portion of the many issues which confront the present Conference, and whose extent has been already indicated in the contributions to the controversy during the past seven months in the LABOUR MONTHLY and in other organs. In view of the shortness of time, it is essential for the Conference to concentrate on the decisive fundamental issues, to keep clear of all quibbling, minor issues, point-scoring, &c., and to endeavour to reach the plainest possible statements of view from those participating on the big outstanding questions. The list of questions given in the agenda, although not to be taken in any mechanical way as tying down discussion, is intended to assist to concentrate the discussion on the principal questions.

The type of discussion which we are endeavouring to develop at this Conference needs to be developed throughout the country, with the fullest free joint participation of I.L.P'ers and Communists, as well as all other workers,

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in order to clear the issues that still divide us and reach a common line. Through these discussions, alongside experience in the common struggle, we shall reach —and it is to be hoped, soon—a united revolutionary party of all the politically conscious militant workers, constituting a strong and firmly based section of the Communist International.

II.—REPORT

ON Sunday, March 19, a Conference of LABOUR MONTHLY readers on the question of Revolutionary Policy took place in the Friars' Hall, London. Starting at 11 a.m., it continued till 7.15 p.m., with a break of an hour between 1 and 2 p.m. About two hundred were present.

Comrade **Alex Gossip,** in opening the Conference from the chair, pointed out that it was intended to have a friendly and comradely discussion on various points of grave and vital importance to the movement. He recalled how some years ago speaking at Southampton, so far as he could see circumstances would force the advanced parties in this country together whether they liked it or not; that to-day he was more convinced of that even than he was two or three years ago.

A letter was read from Comrade **Tom Mann,** regretting that he was unable to be present at the Conference, in which he stressed the necessity for building up a greater measure of unity between the revolutionary forces in the working class movement.

Comrade **J. R. Campbell,** in opening the discussion, pointed out that the first question to be answered must be what is the next link that we should grasp in order to develop the working class struggle and in its course to revolutionise it and lead the working class towards the struggle for power.

To a very considerable degree the economic struggles of the workers had been sabotaged by the leaders. Nevertheless there had grown up a considerable revolt amongst the workers resulting in the formation of rank and file movements in several industries.

The first link in the chain was the development of these movements.

The paper schemes for unity at the top are of no avail unless we have done the basic work at the bottom. The R.P.C.[1] apparently do not see any great significance in the development of the rank and file movements. They would rather set up a brand new form, the Workers' Councils. But the question must be answered: is it the absence of a certain type of organisation or the influence of the reformist splitting policy which is preventing the revolutionary unity of the working class. If you set up Workers' Councils now without first weakening the reformist influence in the union branch and district committee, you will only get a small left wing body. Nothing is more likely to dig a trench between the leftward moving reformist workers and the revolutionaries by setting up these new bodies out of the air at the present time.

The present united front approaches have been made possible by (1) the bankruptcy of reformist policy as revealed in Germany, and (2) the big drive of reformist workers themselves for unity. This latter drive is the result of the approach made in the past from below by the revolutionaries. This united front for revolutionaries must not only mean the coming together for immediate demands but the utilisation of the situation to destroy reformist illusions.

[1] The Revolution Policy Committee of the I.L.P.

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The revolutionising of the immediate struggle can only be done if we develop a strong revolutionary mass Communist Party. There was one gap, and it was no oversight, in the writings of the R.P.C., and that was the rôle of the revolutionary party in the emancipation of the working class. The R.P.C. substitutes the Workers' Council for the revolutionary party. But a Workers' Council can only express the general level of consciousness of the working class in all its different degrees of political development. It is not a body which can give a lead, a body of the politically advanced workers united by a common theory and discipline.

Fascism is a phenomenon of capitalist instability, it uses all kinds of demagogy : down with the Jews ; down with the financiers and international money-lenders, but its aim is to destroy first the Communist Party and then the trade unions, co-operatives, and so on. But the R.P.C. in their first lesson say that Fascists are opposed to the super capitalists and that they do not seem likely to be tolerated by the capitalist class as a whole. This smacks of Sir Oswald Mosley, or Hitler before he reached the stage of responsibility. Fascism, on the contrary, it must be understood, is the terror organisation of big capital.

On the question of taking power it must be made clear that the State is a class instrument of the capitalist class and not a neutral machine like an old Ford motor car which one man can travel one way and when another takes the wheel drives in the opposite direction. This means we must smash this capitalist state machine.

With regard to the objections raised by members of the R.P.C. against coming together into one revolutionary party, Communists have been accused of being too rigid. But the frontiers of Communist rigidity are always changing. Once we were too rigid because we left the Labour Party, because we insisted on a physical force insurrection ; but the R.P.C. have now arrived at those same conclusions. May not the frontiers of rigidity entirely vanish ?

Or again, on the criticism of leaders as being insincere. Engels once said : " The more sincere an opportunist is the more dangerous he is." Memories of the tactics of I.L.P. leaders in putting MacDonald in power in 1924, in being his shock workers from 1924-27, are still fresh. Nevertheless the question of insincerity must not stand in the way of building a mass revolutionary party in this country.

Lastly, on the question of the International, it was impossible to have a big opposition all over the country to remaining in the Labour Party and yet stay in the Second International. Is it possible to create a new International ? Rather if you recognise that you are in a transitional stage of development with the way pointing in the direction of Communism or back into the morass of reformism, what is it that prevents the turn being made to Communism which has the only revolutionary way out of the crisis ?

Comrade **Warbey** admitted that many of us, of the Communist Party, of the I.L.P., and possibly other parties, will come together in a single future party. There is no doubt that there cannot ultimately be two revolutionary parties. Nevertheless, before the revolutionary crisis has reached its sharpest stage, there is everything to be gained from having parties who are criticising one another in a hard comradely fashion.

On the question of leadership it is stated that the united front is the militant agreement between the conscious revolutionary vanguard of the workers and the not yet revolutionary masses of the toilers for the struggle for the immediate demands of the masses. But in practice that has meant that the Communist

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Party, although professing a desire to draw in all sections of the working class into a united front, has taken good care in every case to maintain its political dominance. If the I.L.P. is attacked for not stressing the rôle of a political party, equally I attack the Communist Party for stressing its rôle in all these forms of struggle, because it is bound to lead to internal disagreement and finally to splitting that united front. For C.P. members have all the time sought to maintain C.P. control, whereas perfectly naturally I.L.P. members have felt as politically conscious workers that they were entitled to some political control.

Not only was there a horizontal division between the leaders and the rank and file, but also a vertical division, in other words a moving of the leadership as well as of the rank and file. Leaders do change and change very quickly.

The united front from the top cannot continue as a solid block permanently, but to form it, there must be give and take between the leadership. The position in Germany besides demonstrating the failure of reformism, also demonstrates the failure of the sectarian tactics of the Communist Party.

We face ourselves the very same menace as in Germany, the menace of Fascism. We must get in in advance of Fascism, and to do this means building your organisation right down to the very smallest locality, *i.e.*, Workers' Councils.

We only disagree as to when is the proper time to bring into operation these Workers' Councils. These Councils cannot be set up in a night. Based on the workshops, the streets, the trade union branches, the N.U.W.M. branches, the Tenants' Defence Leagues, we visualise the development of activity on the immediate demands within these separate organisations and the coming together of these separate, isolated demands into one central demand, into one central organisation, the Workers' Council, to present the united front to the capitalist class. The struggle for isolated immediate demands is now reformism, because if you isolate your demand and win that demand, then the workers will have lost the sense that they are participating in a common struggle against capitalism.

The conditions of struggle are being unified by the capitalist class itself who are unifying their attack. From that must come the unification of the counter attack expressed in that unified organisational form, the Workers' Council.

At the afternoon session Comrade **Bob Stewart** took the chair and opened the session by reading Comrade **R. P. Dutt's** letter to Conference (see page 257.)

Comrade **Dunbar**, speaking for the I.L.P., considered that the question whether there was a middle line between Labourism and Communism was not a question. The right, the left and the middle were three distinct historical lines fundamentally different one from the other. It was the general drive of capitalism that compelled the united front and not any shifting of any particular party. After pointing out that the special constables were a potential fascist force, he said that mass demonstrations gave the capitalists an excuse for them. That did not mean that he was against mass demonstrations, but we must make it utterly impossible so far as we can for public opinion, that mass opinion which is not entirely ours and can be created by the master class press, to stop that line.

We have got to find a method of linking the rank and file movements together for combined action, and so the I.L.P. in the south advocate Workers' Councils. The rôle of the I.L.P. in its thrust forward of Workers' Councils

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is, with the rising consciousness of the workers, to achieve a general level of the acceptance of a democracy distinct from capitalist democracy; they will be under the political leadership not necessarily of the I.L.P., or of any existing organisation.

The first question rather than that whether it was possible to do a revolutionary working class job nationally without being attached to the Third International, should be, how can we get rid of our national exploiters and replace them by workers' power. The only real international of the working class—the only really possible inter-linking of the working class is national workers' control internationally linked.

Comrade **Springhall,** in dealing with the I.L.P. attitude to war, referred to the R.P.C. lesson on Imperialism and War, in which it was stated that the Workers' Councils will enable the workers to take effective action against war, will be the means by which imperialist war is changed into civil war. But this misses out the rôle of the revolutionary party which alone can lead the workers in the fight against war.

Comrade Lenin in the thesis that was adopted at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, laid down clearly when and under what conditions Soviets should be established. These conditions do not exist at the moment. Therefore, while it is correct that there has not been sufficient popularisation of the idea of Soviets, for the I.L.P. to suggest that Soviets or Workers' Councils can be the only form of united front at the moment, would be doing a disservice to the working-class movement.

Comrade **Murry** said that it was necessary for Marxian Socialists to rally all the forces, all the ideas they can, and wholeheartedly support the mass of the workers against Fascism. Never was the demand for the Marxian analysis so urgent.

Comrade **Branson** said that the immediate step is to get into the ranks of the Communist Party as the only party which has the necessary organisational form for carrying out the task of the revolution, to abolish the presence of more than one revolutionary party and thus to clear the minds of the workers of a great deal of difficulties that exist.

Between revolutionaries and reformists let there be united front action in organisational forms requisite to meet the specific tasks agreed upon beforehand.

There is not one of us here who does not emphasise the necessity of doing so. If we do not call a stop to these suggestions of waiting until four or five revolutionary parties are going to spring up with one definite revolutionary policy, we are allying ourselves with the reformist elements.

I left the I.L.P. nine months ago. It is not enough to criticise the C.P. from the outside. It is necessary to come in and thereby strengthen the Party from within.

Comrade **Lansberg,** speaking as a member of the I.L.P., referred to the question of the unifying of the revolutionary forces here and the necessity of having one central party from where we can take our instructions. This is essential and I will welcome one central revolutionary party. The question then arises, which party shall it be? Shall the Communist Party disappear or the I.L.P.? There is a danger that the I.L.P. will split at the Easter Conference, the right going back to the Labour Party and the left wing forming a distinct party on its own, opposing the Communist Party because it takes the whole of its directions from the Comintern.

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With regard to the busmen's strike, we do not think that because they struck for 2s. 6d. and did not get it that therefore they lost. It is not gaining the 2s. 6d. which makes for revolution but the development of working class political consciousness, and that we are getting towards an understanding of the class system.

Comrade **Wintringham** said that there were many questions already discussed, such as Workers' Councils, that could be dealt with better within one revolutionary party. There still remained the question of the dictatorship and how the revolution is achieved. Take the question of " the formation of the proletariat into a class." This cannot be done merely by propaganda, &c., but in the course of the struggle wherein there are stages in which necessarily the aims are limited. It is premature to form Workers' Councils now on the basis of what can be called a mechanical collection of defensive questions to-day, and not to wait until you can form them on questions arising out of these defensive struggles, that is questions which imply the power of the working class.

Comrade **Sloan** pointed to the position in the *New Leader* where Fenner Brockway publishes articles from Middleton Murry, &c., which turn Marxism into a pre-Marxist Christian Socialism plus Chauvinism. Yet the columns of the *New Leader* are not flooded with protests from the revolutionary Marxists in the I.L.P. In so far as that is not done every group and every member in the I.L.P. is partly responsible for that kind of thing. So long as these leaders are acknowledged as the leaders and are not attacked when they are not Marxists, the Communist Party is absolutely correct in maintaining that the I.L.P. is not a revolutionary party, but is a menshevik, and in fact anti-revolutionary party.

Members of the I.L.P. are forced to recognise by the progress and history of the crisis that in principle the Communist Party's analysis has been correct and that their own Party's analysis has been incorrect. They themselves believe still that they can change their own Party's attitude and make it more and more a revolutionary party, and in fact that they can make the I.L.P. more and more a replica of the Communist Party, except for the fact that the C.P. and not the I.L.P. is affiliated to the 3rd International.

Comrade **Kimche** asked whether the Second International had such potent powers that it has rendered all the efforts of the Communist International futile. He maintained that the Communist Party had lost the confidence of the German workers. At the first outbreak of fascism the working class organisations here were smashed. (Interruption : What about Belfast ?)

Comrade **Lane,** speaking as a member of the I.L.P., objected to the rigidity and arrogance of the Communist Party. The I.L.P. has undergone a complete change in the last twelve months, its whole policy has been turned topsy turvey, but it still wants to be so turned time and time again until we as revolutionaries will all be satisfied with it. If the I.L.P. makes a mistake it is not afraid to learn from it. He said he welcomed the united front call of the I.L.P. to the C.P. and vice versa. As a result of this united front it is hoped that we shall be able to hammer out a really revolutionary policy for the future.

Comrade **Mahon** dealt with the development of the revolutionary leadership in the trade unions. The strike weapon was the only potent weapon the working class possesses in the fight against capitalism.

Take the case at Lübeck in the early days of the Hitler dictatorship where the Social Democratic mayor was shot by the Fascists. In response to a call

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from the Communists and Social Democrats, from the revolutionary trade union opposition and from the reformist trade union leaders, the workers in Lübeck declared a general strike. But elsewhere because the reformist and social democratic leaders refused to ally themselves with the Communist Party a strike was not declared against the Fascists. The revolutionary trade union movement was too weak.

So here also it is necessary to develop a powerful revolutionary trade union opposition from the rank and file movements already being thrown up by the workers.

Every struggle of the workers, no matter what their demands are, is an opportunity for the revolutionary workers to really develop the class struggle, to develop their understanding into an understanding of the class struggle and also to win success for the workers and so set going through the whole of the working class a movement against the capitalist class.

Comrade **Harvey** was of the opinion that the Workers' Councils were the only thing that could arouse the fighting enthusiasm of the workers. Use every possible occasion to arouse the fighting instinct of the workers, use every opportunity of breaking down their fear of law and order. You have got to put up a fighting policy against the boss or else you will get Fascism. I am willing to join either the I.L.P. or the C.P. when they become fighting organisations. The way to beat Hitlerism is to build up a mass party on broad lines, on mass lines.

Comrade **Kermet** considered that the only thing which exists in the C.P. which repels the R.P.C. is that in the former policy is formulated from the top. As with the united front policy the whole C.P. immediately made a *volte face*, immediately changed its whole tactics at a word from the top without any discussion, without any criticism. This is not democratic centralism. The Communist Party is the only revolutionary party in this country; the I.L.P. can never be such a one because it is the Communist Party which has led the revolutionary theory and practice in this country and throughout the world. But the membership must be allowed free criticism before the event and then only after they have thrashed the matter out, after they have assisted in formulating the policy, the rigidity can be imposed.

Comrade **Stewart** said that the dictatorship of the proletariat minus the guiding hand of the revolutionary party of the working class, the class conscious vanguard, might be a dictatorship of some kind but not of the proletariat. The Communist Party sets as its aim the winning of the majority of the working class. That we are beginning in some degree to win numbers of the workers is evident from the kind of ferment that is going on inside the I.L.P.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the tap root of the revolution and any refusal to accept it is a refusal to be revolutionary. We must popularise the idea of Soviets, but this idea of setting up a committee and then it changes from one thing to another, means that it is occupying the position of the Party. A Party is a permanent organisation and one which operates the leadership of the working class by levers on mass organisations like the trade unions, co-operatives, &c.

Nobody who believes in the dictatorship of the proletariat can be a pacifist. The proletariat dictates by the organisation of all its physical forces, its mass power, its military strength.

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Comrade **Campbell** in his concluding speech said that there could be no greater crime for a Marxist to pass by the existing movement that the workers have created such as the rank and file movements, for some fancy idea of unity that has not emanated from the mass of the workers. We have a passionate aspiration after unity, therefore we will create the organ of unity, the Workers' Councils :—that is the method of petty-bourgeois utopianism which does not consider what are the movements we can seize upon in the ranks of the working class.

As regards the statement that while ultimately we will come to a single revolutionary party there was no harm in having a scrap between the two parties. Meantime, what was the position. One party says that the rank and file movement is the movement to take hold of ; the other party says that it is essential to have Workers' Councils. There is no harm in that ? There is great harm in that.

On the question of the International Comrade Dunbar wanted, after the British revolution, an international federation of Soviet Republics, but the idea of an international under capitalism as an instrument to fight capitalism does not exist for him. If the I.L.P. after Easter is coming out with a pseudo-revolutionary policy, but with no international revolutionary associations, and going to attempt to exist beside the Communist Party, the one revolutionary party with its international associations, then within twelve months your party with the pseudo-revolutionary policy will be as dead as all the other attempts made to build up pseudo-revolutionary parties outside the Communist International.

Comrade Kimche in his analysis of the German situation omitted to mention that while in 1921 the Communists stood for a rising in Germany, they were also resisting the disarming of the working class by the Social Democratic Government.

With regard to Comrade Kermet's assertion that there is no discussion inside the Communist Party, take the three months discussion before the Communist Party Congress last year in the *Daily Worker*. There is no such discussion now before the Derby Conference going on in the I.L.P.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, the mass struggle of the workers and the mass insurrection as the means of seizing power are stated to be accepted by the R.P.C. But other things should also be accepted : that the State cannot be captured but must be treated as being a capitalist instrument and must be smashed by the working class ; that the dictatorship of the proletariat implies a central leadership which is more necessary after the establishment of the dictatorship even than during the struggle for the dictatorship ; that there can be no revolutionary party without a revolutionary theory, *i.e.*, the theory of Marx and Lenin, of the Communist International ; that the only consistent international working-class party is the Communist International.

R.P.C. comrades should go and discuss amongst themselves what has been said on both sides and come to the conclusion that there is only one way open : the way forward to the Communist Party or the way backward to the Labour Party. We do not ask you to tear up your cards or come in one by one as individuals, but to direct your fight for a consistent policy inside the I.L.P. Fight for a revolutionary policy and work with the Communist Party to carry out that policy ; work for coming over *en masse* into the ranks of the Communist Party.

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INTERNATIONAL

For the United Front against Fascism!

TO THE WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES.

THE crisis continues. Unemployment is increasing without interruption. Hunger and misery are seizing ever-fresh sections of the workers. The capitalist offensive is assuming ever-sharper forms. The bourgeoisie are preparing to launch a campaign against all the political and economic achievements of the working class. Fascist reaction is seizing one country after another.

The establishment of the open Fascist dictatorship in Germany has inexorably confronted millions of workers of all countries with the question of the imperative need for organising the united front of struggle against the Fascist offensive of the bourgeoisie, and above all, against the German bourgeoisie who, step by step, are robbing the working class of all economic and political achievements and attempting to crush the workers' movement with the most brutal method of terror.

The main obstacle to the formation of the united front of struggle of the Communist and Social-Democratic workers was and is the policy conducted by the Social-Democratic Parties, who have exposed the international proletariat to the blows of the class enemy.

This policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, known as the so-called policy of the "lesser evil," has led in practice to the triumph of Fascist reaction in Germany.

The Communist International and the Communist Parties of all countries have repeatedly declared their readiness to join in a common fight along with the Social-Democratic workers against the capitalist offensive, against political reaction and civil war. The Communist Parties were the organisers of the common fight of the Communist, Social-Democratic and non-Party workers, in spite of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties, who systematically disrupted the united front of the working masses.

On July 20 last year, the Communist Party of Germany, after the Prussian Social-Democratic Government had been driven out by Papen, proposed to the Social-Democratic Party and the German General Federation of Trade Unions the organisation of a common strike against Fascism. But the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B., with the approval of the whole of the Second International, described the proposal to organise a common strike as a provocation.

The Communist Party of Germany repeated its proposal of common action at the moment when Hitler seized power; it called upon the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party and the Executive Committee of the German General Federation of Trade Unions to organise the resistance to Fascism, but again met with a refusal.

Nay, more, when in November last year the Berlin traffic workers unanimously went on strike against a wage reduction, the Social-Democratic Party sabotaged the united front struggle. The whole practice of the International Labour Movement is full of similar examples.

The Bureau of the Labour and Socialist International published on February 19 last, a declaration on the readiness of the Social-Democratic

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Parties affiliated to this International to form a united front with the Communists in order to fight against the Fascist reaction in Germany. This declaration stands in sharp contradiction to the whole of the previous actions of the L.S.I. and Social-Democratic Parties.

The whole policy and activity of the L.S.I., hitherto, justifies the Communist International and the Communist Parties putting no faith in the sincerity of the declaration of the Bureau of the L.S.I. which makes its proposal at a moment when in a number of countries and before all in Germany, the working masses are taking into their own hands the organising of the united front.

In spite of this, however, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in view of Fascism which is unchaining all the forces of world reaction against the working class of Germany, calls upon all Communist Parties to make yet another attempt to set up the united front of struggle with the Social-Democratic workers through the medium of the Social-Democratic Parties.

The E.C.C.I. makes this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class on the basis of the class struggle will be able to repel the offensive of capital and Fascism, and to accelerate to an extraordinary degree the inevitable end of all capitalist exploitation.

Owing to the peculiarity of the conditions, as well as the differences in the concrete fighting tasks confronting the working class in the various countries, an agreement between the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties for definite actions against the bourgeoisie can be carried out most successfully within the confines of each individual country. The Executive Committee of the Communist International recommends the Communist Parties of the various countries to approach the Central Committees of the Social-Democratic Parties belonging to the Labour and Socialist International with proposals regarding joint actions against Fascism and against the capitalist offensive.

Nevertheless, the negotiations between the parties concluding such an agreement must be based on the most elementary pre-requisites for the common fight.

Without a concrete programme of action against the bourgeoisie, any agreement between the parties would be directed against the interests of the working class.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International therefore proposes the following points as a basis of such an agreement :

(*a*) The Communists and Social-Democrats commence at once to organise and carry out defensive action against the attacks of Fascism and reaction on the political, trade union, Co-operative and other workers' organisations, on the workers' Press, on the freedom of meetings, demonstrations and strikes. They shall organise common defence against the armed attacks of the Fascist bands by carrying out mass protests, street demonstrations and political mass strikes. They shall proceed to organise committees of action in the workshops and factories, the Labour Exchanges and the workers' quarters, as well as to organise self-defence groups.

(*b*) Communists and Social-Democrats shall commence at once to organise the protest of the workers with the aid of meetings, demonstrations and strikes against any wage reductions, against worsening of working conditions, against attacks on social insurance, against the cutting down of unemployment benefit, against dismissals from the factories.

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(*c*) In the adoption and practical carrying out of these two conditions, the Executive Committee of the Communist International considers it possible to recommend the Communist Parties during the time of common fight against capital and Fascism to refrain from making attacks on Social-Democratic organisations. The most ruthless fight must be conducted against all those who violate the conditions of the agreement in carrying out the united front, as against strike breakers who disrupt the united front of the workers.

These conditions which are put forward for acceptance by the Labour and Socialist International apply also to those parties which, like the I.L.P. for example, have proposed to the Comintern the organisation of the united front of struggle.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International which makes these proposals before the international working class, calls upon all Communist Parties, and in the first place upon the Communist Party of Germany, immediately and without waiting for the results of negotiations and agreements with Social-Democracy with regard to a common fight, to proceed to organise joint fighting committees with Social-Democratic workers and with workers of all other persuasions.

The Communists have proved, through their long years of struggle, that they stand, and will stand, not in words but in deeds, in the front ranks of the fight for the united front in class actions against the bourgeoisie.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International firmly believes that the Social-Democratic and non-Party workers, regardless of what attitude the Social-Democratic leaders adopt in setting up the united front, will overcome all obstacles and, together with the Communists, set up the united front, not in words, but in deeds.

Precisely at the present moment, when German Fascism has organised a monstrous provocation, in setting fire to the Reichstag, forging documents about an alleged Communist insurrection, &c., in order to crush the workers' movement in Germany, every worker must recognise his class duty in the fight against the capitalist offensive and Fascist reaction.

Down with the Fascist reaction and the terror against the working class.

For the united front of struggle of the proletariat !

Proletarians of all countries, unite for the fight against the capitalist offensive and capitalism !

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

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BOOK REVIEW

LENIN AND THE MASSES.

Memories of Lenin. Vol. II. By N. Krupskaya. (Martin Lawrence.) 5/- (cloth): 2/- (paper).

THE second volume of *Memories of Lenin*, by Comrade Krupskaya, take us through the vitally important period from 1907 to 1917. From the period of blackest reaction and anxious years of exile to the day when the Russian workers and peasants, under the leadership of Lenin and the Party, conquered power, and Lenin was appointed Chairman of the first Council of People's Commissars.

Its publication at the time when the Commemoration Campaign of the 50th Anniversary of Marx's death is taking place is particularly timely and instructive. For these Memories show the hard struggle carried on by Lenin against all those who were distorting Marxism, as well as revealing how time and time again, when difficult problems arose, Lenin would study everything that Marx and Engels had written that had a special bearing on these problems.

It can be easily seen how Lenin was always teaching and always learning. Always fighting against opportunism and distortions, always feeling every stirring amongst the Russian masses, always giving the lead and line not only for the Party in Russia but for the whole Second International.

How they called Lenin: "narrow," "difficult to get on with," "aloof and unbending," &c., &c. How childish it all seems that this Giant among revolutionaries should have been accused of such things, by those who, time and time again, had to confess Lenin was right.

The period covered in this book shows so simply, clearly, and objectively the whole character of the fight that Lenin waged during the years of reaction; the years of revolutionary revival; the war years, and the decisive days after the March Revolution.

Seemingly always against the stream, but always going forward, the revolutionary movement continually being steeled in struggle. The breaking through the Czarist ban on revolutionary papers, but no sooner one suppressed, another out. Utilising any and every means to get the revolutionary message into the factories.

And Lenin, in exile, impatient, harassed by persecution, poverty and the burning desire to be in Russia leading the fight. Lecturing to students, long letters and conversations with every contact in Russia and going to Russia. Eagerly reading every scrap of news that came to hand. Preparing material for some of his most important works such as *Imperialism* and *State and Revolution*. Addressing letters of political directives, preparing for Party Conferences and Congresses, formulating speeches for Bolshevik Members of the Duma. All those activities are shown here. And shown in such a way as to make all of us realise how much easier our own struggle is, because of so many obstacles having been cleared out of the way by Lenin's work, activity and leadership.

From this book we can all learn great lessons. Get a deeper understanding of the works of Marx and Engels, and a clearer conception of the whole line and meaning of Leninism.

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One would like to quote extensively, but where could one start and stop? The book simply must be read, studied and re-read and studied time and time again.

We must be content with only one or two quotations. When in December, 1910, there were the first signs of revolutionary revival as indicated in the demonstrations on the occasion of Tolstoy's death, and the appearance of two Bolshevik newspapers, Lenin wrote:

> To work, comrades. Begin everywhere to build up your organisation, to create and strengthen Social-Democratic workers' cells, to develop economic and political agitation. In the first Russian Revolution the proletariat taught the masses of the people to fight for liberty; in the second revolution it must lead them to victory.

This class call was heard and met with a mighty response, as seen in the great strike wave of 1911-12. Later in the war period, after the Trial of the Bolshevik Deputies for their revolutionary fight against the war, Lenin wrote an article called "What has the Trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Fraction Proved" (and in view of the sentences on our comrades in connection with the Invergordon Mutiny and the recent South Wales Conspiracy Case, we specially draw the attention of our readers to this quotation):

> The words quoted in the indictment, "It is necessary to turn the guns not against our brothers, the wage-slaves of other countries, but against the reaction of the bourgeois governments and parties of all countries"—these words will spread, thanks to the trial, and they have already spread over Russia as an appeal to proletarian internationalism, to proletarian revolution. The class slogan of the vanguard of the workers of Russia has reached, thanks to the trial, the widest masses of workers.
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> * * * *
>
> The *Pravdist* papers and the "Muranov" type of work (illegal work of the parties and the use of parliamentary methods for revolutionary purposes), have brought about the unity of four-fifths of the class-conscious workers of Russia. About forty thousand workers bought *Pravda*; many more read it. Let war, prison, Siberia, and hard labour break five times more or ten times more—this section of the workers *cannot* be disloyal. It is alive. It is permeated with revolutionary spirit; it is anti-chauvinist. It *alone* stands among the masses of the people, and deeply rooted in their midst, as a protagonist of the internationalism of the toilers, the exploited, the oppressed.

And later, when in connection with the Kienthal Conference in April, 1916, Comrade Krupskaya in commenting on the lines upon which the revolutionary fight against war had to be carried out as outlined in the proposals of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party to that conference, says:

> In this proposal of the Central Committee we find a clear expression of the attitude of the Bolsheviks and Ilyich (Lenin) to the masses; the masses must always be told the whole truth, the unvarnished truth, without fearing that the truth will frighten them away. The Bolsheviks placed all their hopes in the masses—the masses and only the masses will attain Socialism.

How well that faith in the capacity of the masses to attain Socialism is written in the history of the Soviet Union to-day.

Lastly, I cannot refrain from giving a quotation to show what effect the masses had upon Lenin, from the important speech Lenin made in April, 1917, at the All-Russian Conference of the Party, where he closed by stating:

> I shall conclude by refering to the speech that made the strongest impression on me. I heard a coal-miner deliver a remarkable speech. Without using a single bookish word, he told how they had made the revolution. Those miners were not concerned with the question as to whether or not they should have a president. They seized the mine, and the important question to them was how

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to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, of which there was a scarcity. And the miners again agreed on the method of obtaining it. Now this is a real programme of the revolution, not derived from books. This is a real seizure of power locally.

Enough I think has been written to show the importance of this book, and I urge every reader to obtain it, spread its message and lessons abroad amongst the workers, and so help on the daily fight of the workers here to-day in preparation for the successful workers' revolution to-morrow.

HARRY POLLITT.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The National Wages Board and After. A Railwayman. (L.R.D.) 15 pp. 1d.

Russian Trade. Edward Luboff. (Anglo-Russian Economic Society.) 31 pp. 3d.

Democracy in Crisis. H. J. Laski. (Allen & Unwin.) 267 pp. 7s. 6d.

Education Towards Revolution. Jas Younie, Rose Cottage, Lossiemouth. 3d.

Insurance and the Money Trust. W. Tait. (I.L.P.) 15 pp. 2d.

A Six-Hour Working Day. R. C. Wallhead, M.P. (I.L.P.) 15 pp. 2d.

Marx, Engels, Lenin on the Irish Revolution. Ralph Fox. (Modern Books.) 36 pp. 3d.

The Road to Victory. H. Pollitt. (C.P.G.B., 16 King Street, W.C.2.) 93 pp. 6d.

Prepare for Power. O. Kuusinen. (Modern Books.) 160 pp. 4d.

How to Work in the Factories and Streets. Idris Cox. (C.P.G.B.) 48 pp. 1d.

The Next Step in Britain, Ireland, America. (Modern Books.) 88 pp. 2d.

Theses and Resolutions XII. Plenum E.C.C.I. (Modern Books.) 64 pp. 2d.

Resolutions Adopted by the Twelfth Congress C.P.G.B. 28 pp. 1d.

Where is Science Going? Max Planc with a preface by Albert Einstein. (Allen & Unwin.) 221 pp. 7s. 6d.

Storm. No. 1. (February, 1933) Stories of the Struggle. 33 Ormond Yard, W.C.1. 32 pp. 6d.

The Money Muddle and the Way Out. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence. (Allen & Unwin.) 79 pp. 2s. 6d.

China Forum. Vol. 2, No. 1, New Series (bi-weekly). Room 302, 216 Szechuen Road, Shanghai. 10 cents. (Sub. rates: China (Sh.) $3.00; U.S.A., G. $1.00; Europe 4/-.)

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Volume 15 January, 1933 Number 1

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

1933 *AND ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTAGONISM* R.P.D.

The Manœuvres of the T.U.C. HARRY POLLITT

I.L.P. "Revolutionary Policy"—Discussion

I.—The Present Position of the I.L.P. JACK GASTER

II.—The Dilemma of I.L.P. Revolutionaries D. EDWARDS

Materialism and the Concept of Behaviour L.H.

Modern Weapons and Revolution T. H. WINTRINGHAM

Marx and Engels on Ireland—IV.

THE
LABOUR
MONTHLY

Volume 15 February, 1933 Number 2

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM AND THE DAILY STRUGGLE R.P.D.

Dialectical Materialism and Natural Science CLEMENS DUTT

The Meerut Sentences R. PAGE ARNOT

War and the Partition of China R. BRIDGEMAN

How the League of Nations Works AN EYE-WITNESS

Imperialism and the Split in Socialism N. LENIN

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